

LIBERAL OPINIONS,

OR THE

HISTORY of BENIGNUS.

V O L. II.



LIBERAL OPINIONS,

Or the HISTORY of

B E N I G N U S,

By COURTNEY MELMOTH.

IN SIX VOLUMES,

Second Edition, revised, corrected, and enlarged.



The Abode of Benignus discover'd.

V O L. II.

L O N D O N,

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JOHN H. MASON

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O F T H E

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Chap. XXXIII. The same subject.

Chap. XXXIV. Sheweth, that what every body says may not be true, and that the Vox Populi is not necessarily the Vox Dei. Inversion of popular maxims. What every body says, sometimes false. An instance. Mr. Greaves

discloses the cause of his journey. The chapter closes in tears.

Chap. XXXV. Prior to the perusal of which, every reader who is not habitually hard of heart, should provide himself with an handkerchief. The character of Mr. Greaves becomes uncommonly interesting.

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The robber's apology for the first offence. His prayer. Meditations on his booty. Alarms of guilt. Struggles of a delicate heart. The means of sustaining life should be honest.

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LIBERAL

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C H A P. XXXII.

TH E ardour of your sentiments, fir, becomes your age; and I am pleased with your compliment, because I perceive it is the effervescence of an amiable heart. I was going to say, that if,—but we will proceed to our more familiar illustrations! Imagine, then that, when these children were five weeks old, the mother of the poorest, reduced to extreme necessity, puts her infant in a basket, and lays it at the door of a person

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equally

equally celebrated for benevolence and wealth; the gentleman takes it into his house, clothes, feeds, and educates it, as his own; that very infant, which, with the *parent*, would be the lout I have described, would with its *protector* be as different a creature as could exist. His pains, passions, pleasures, pursuits, and ideas, totally *reversed*: imagine, likewise, that some gipsy steals, or kidnaps, as it is called, the rich child from the cradle, and strolls with it up and down the country: it will have its education in the open air, its lodging in a barn, and its dirty diet under a hedge. Probably, it will imbibe the craft and subtlety of the gipsy, and limit its utmost ambition to trick the traveller out of sixpence, to cross the
palm

palm with silver, and tell the events which *have* happened (or are *still* to be brought forward) by looking into the *line of life*. Thus, in every other instance, (with a few peculiar exceptions, that have nothing to do with general rules,) *habit* and *education* form the mind, and colour the human character.

But how does this influence, what we call virtue and vice? said I: Virtue and vice, (rejoin'd the gentleman,) are as dependent upon external, as they are upon internal circumstances: they are properties not more hereditary than adventitious and artificial; nor do they issue more from the heart than from habit. You astonish me, I replied. You are now, (cried he,) at the period of human life, when

curiosity is *often* caught in surprizes. Experience, will teach you to hear what now seems strange, without emotion; I have said nothing but what will too soon be intelligible.

Pray go on, sir; pray go on: how your observations open upon me the prospects of life!

C H A P. XXXIII.

There are, doubtless, resumed the gentleman, some constitutions so adapted by nature to virtue, that no troubles, situations, or temptations, can subdue, or extirpate, their amiable propensities; but *ninety-nine* times out of a *hundred*, a character takes its bias and bearing from mere tuition,
and

and the line it is either led or thrown into, in the first stage of the human journey. If there are *no* innate ideas, fir, it follows that the mind of every new-born babe is equally pure. If there *are*, those infantine seeds of the understanding and little embryos of intellect are easily turned into what channel the parent thinks proper, so that I cannot but think the father of a family one of the most awful charges upon earth :

“ ————— our parent’s hand
Writes on our hearts the first faint characters,
Which time retracing deepens into strength.”

After which,

Nothing can efface them but death or heaven.

Yet we behold, said I, many children
unlike their parents, both good and

bad. It is admitted, said Mr. Greaves : yet you will, at the same time, observe, where the notions of parents and children are dissimilar, the dissimilitude arises rather from difference of ages, or improper culture, than any thing else ; in general, children are not liker in features than habits ; and I do assure you, family-*minds* are as often transmitted as family-*faces*. There is a tractability in youth which receives, like snow, every impression ; and it is almost as difficult to erase the impression of one as the other : nothing but heaven can effect it. If a son is trained up early to decency of manners, and has the example of dignity living and moving before his eyes (unless his temper is par-

particularly untoward) he will turn out an elegant character: if he is trained up in different principles, he will act accordingly. The hoyden and the prude, amongst the other sex, take not their tint of character one time in ten from nature, but from a neglect early to give them a proper idea of deportment. But yet, said I, very sedate women have romping, runaway daughters, and very prudent fathers have very perverse sons. I mean, (replied Mr. Greaves,) to say no more than this, that, generally speaking, men and women act and think as they are taught whilst they are only able to lisp out their meaning; that education will have some influence on the most abandoned; and that, upon the whole, virtue and vice de-

pend very essentially on our primary sentiments and examples; which, whether good or ill, will externally attend us in some measure, through all possible transitions from the time we leave our cradles, to the time we shall be deposited in our coffins. If I have not wearied you, we will *now* see how far habit influences our judgments in the great and important article of *reputation*.

C H A P. XXXIV.

I listen to you, sir (said I), with joy, and only lament that I am contributing to your fatigue, at the time that I am receiving such a fund of entertainment.

Habit,

Habit, my young friend, said the gentleman, operates with equal energy upon man and beast. I could easily produce evidences of the fact, by casting an eye upon the very horses now engaged in the dutiful drudgery of dragging us along; and upon the herds and flocks which are grazing or sporting beside us : but we will confine ourselves to our own species, which are certainly the most interesting objects of speculation. I was about to observe, that custom has much to do with our moral characters. There are certain actions, so naturally and palpably, good or evil, that neither sophistry, nor slander, nor address, can either injure, mend, or mar them. To question the light at noon day, or the dark in the zenith of the night,

night, would argue a malady beyond madness: so in like manner to dispute, whether downright wickedness is wickedness, and evident excellence is excellence, would be a lunacy in ethics, so absurd, that the poetical frenzy of poor Lee would be cool argument to it; on the other hand, my good sir, if you live and mix long with mankind, you will find many of your fellow-creatures pining away existence under the lashes, the bleeding lashes of reproach, merely because it is the *custom* to call one thing right and another wrong, without tracing either to the bottom. It is a maxim that the Vox Populi, is the Vox Dei, that (as you know it is translated) "what every body says must be true." I know nothing so

deserving

deserving refutation as a collection of those old saws and proverbs, which, acquiring force from antiquity, and estimation from use, for there are virtuosos in letters as well as in coins, are at length considered as utterly incontestible. Now, certain I am, that upon an examination into those very maxims we put so much credit in, some will turn out futile, some disputable, and many unfaithful; for minute scrutinies we have not time; it will be sufficient to look into *that* I have just mentioned, and there is none more implicitly believed. "What every body says must be true." I have myself seen many instances to disprove this; but I shall beg your acceptance of one which is now uppermost in my memory. A young gentleman

eleman of my particular acquaintance,
 has for some time been deserted by
 his old companions, and branded as a
 man of unsteady principles, whose
 heart I know to abound with all those
 sensibilities which have hurried him
 as it were into the vortex of liberality,
 till he is become an object of liberality
 himself. He has those glowing feel-
 ings, and sentiments, which do at
 once honour and service to human
 nature: notwithstanding which, like
 poor Mr. Blewitt (whose history was
 recited by the grocer) embarrassments
 have beset him, and the world sets
 him down an *undone* man. The
 world gets hold of a prejudice and
 then it is called Vox Dei. The Vox
 Populi, is given as the sentiment of
every-body, and thus many reputations
 are

are mistaken and misrepresented, which deserve a better fate. There are various persons likewise now particularly reprobated for a few indelicate concessions, to which necessity may, in violence of their better judgments, have constrained them to yield, who (had they possessed happier circumstances) would have made a much more respectable figure than those which now mark them with infamy. Many an unfortunate female too, at this time wandering up and down the streets, many an insulted and deserving character: but I am rambling too miscellaneously; I feel myself a little weary: Heigho.

Here the gentleman stopped abruptly; his countenance became suddenly clouded, his lip quivered, his eye

eye remained fixed; and clasping his hands forcibly together, he at length burst into tears. After he a little recovered himself, he caught me hold by the arm, and exclaimed, Oh! fir, my daughter! my daughter! my Almeria!

C H A P. XXXV.

I am now composed, my young friend; the idea of a domestic misfortune obtruded itself upon me, and I could not help feeling the stroke of humanity, of nature, and a father. Heaven! cried I, you distract me. I was about to take notice, replied Mr. Greaves, of *one* cruelty in the Vox Populi, which is certainly against every
 notion

notion of the Vox Dei. It is the custom, sir, to abandon the weakest part of our species, for *that* ruin which the artifices of our sex have perpetrated; nor can any future repentance remove the sense of their error, or restore them to the bosoms of more fortunate women :

“ They set like stars to rise no more.”

I had a wife, sir, with whom I have mourned many years, though I buried her but six weeks ago. She died of a broken heart; and there was, I assure you, a woe in the family big enough to break it. About eleven years ago, sir, an only child was taken from me; I was robbed of her by a man whom I held the nearest to my heart; and for five years it has
been

been my incessant business to recover my darling, but in vain. My wife fell into a deep and rapid consumption, and I was obliged to reside with her in the country. She grew worse and weaker every hour; but two days before she resigned her last breath, we received (by a special messenger) a packet; how shall I speak it? from my beloved, misguided, repenting wanderer! The poor thing had (the better to persuade) thrown the pathetic parts of her story into poetry. But that which delighted me more, far more, than all the rest, and which would have more magic for a parent's heart, than the poetry of a Milton, was an attested account from a man of reputation, that my child was actually at last under the protection of
that

that noble institution which offers an asylum to insulted penitence. In the first transport, I could not conceal the news from my wife, but she had only power to press the paper, trembling to her bosom, and feebly lifted up her eyes to heaven; the rest you must spare me, sir, upon the tender subject; she is dead! she is in heaven!

The poor gentleman covered his face in his handkerchief, and I have no words to describe my own feelings.

C H A P. XXXVI.

When Mr. Greaves could again lift up his head, he told me, that having trusted to the ground the remains of his wife, he was now going to visit

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his

his long-lost daughter, who was in—he stopt, and I was unwilling to enlarge upon the subject, though I desired most ardently to see the poetry he spoke of; but for the present we dropt the matter, and a profound silence ensued till we again changed horses. At last, however, Mr. Greaves perceiving my anxiety, and guessing the cause, put his hand into his pocket, and produced a small bundle of papers, fastened by a piece of red tape, from these he took a manuscript, of which he thus declared his intentions, as he held it in his hand.

Here it is, here is that unhappy girl, my poor Almeria's petition; read it, young gentleman, read it, and pity the daughter, and the father. If it should particularly strike you, take a
copy,

copy, and if you continue long in London, perhaps you may see it in print: if you should not, and you should chance to survive me, (as it is most probable you will) publish it; and at the same time, publish with it this *Letter of Gratitude*; there are reasons why I would not chuse (being but too much interested in the contents) to appear in the business; take it therefore, and give it to the world at your best leisure. There, sir; it were improper to suppress it; perhaps it may fall into the hands of the young and dissipated, perhaps it may find its way into the closets of the chaste and beautiful. The libertine may snatch it up in the intervals of his gay career; and the parent, afflicted by the loss of *his* child, may be induced

duced to read it from affection and curiosity. In all, or in any of these cases, it will afford some salutary reflections, and the heart, the conscience, and the understanding will point them out immediately. He put the paper into my hand. I reminded him of the pleasing prospect of seeing his restored daughter. He did not seem insensible of my wishes to dissipate his melancholy, but said nothing. As I knew it must be some time before he could collect himself, and perceiving he began to close his eyes, as if he desired silence, I left him to his reflections (which it would have been impertinent to interrupt after the hint he had given me) and began to open my papers, which melted me so many times into tears during the perusal, that

that I was heartily glad the poor gentleman *affected* slumber. As I have now had the performance so long by me I shall set it down in my journal in this place, where (though it somewhat interferes with my further connection with Mr. Greaves) it properly belongs, because I would not disjoint the subject from the sentiments which introduced it to my knowledge; so that if ever my history is found, the history of this unhappy lady will be found with it; and in so publishing an age, they can fall into few hands that will not send them to the press.

C H A P. XXXVII.

The *Letter of Gratitude* directly follows; and was, I believe, designed as a short dedication to the work. It was written by the father.

To

THE REVEREND

— *—* *—*

SIR,

To whom should the penitent daughter address the sentiments of reformation but to him who has had the greatest share in promoting it? To whom should the father (who hence derives the felicity of his last moments)

pay

pay the tribute of gratitude, but to that fountain from whence he traces his blessings to their source? The restored ALMERIA, attributes to the force of your arguments, and to the tenderness of your admonitions, much of that abhorrence for vice, and dignity of amendment, that now inspire her. There are hundreds of daughters, no doubt, under the same obligation, and hundreds of fathers whose prayers and tears repay you for it. For this, I had almost said, heavenly eloquence, may you long be distinguished, and may you bestow thereby, upon many other parents (now mourning for their children), the serenity and the hope which has been conferred upon

THE FATHER OF ALMERIA.

C H A P. XXXVIII.

A L M E R I A ;

O R,

T H E P E N I T E N T.

An Epistle from an Unfortunate Daughter in —, to her Family in the Country.

WITHDRAWN from all temptations that entice,

The frauds of fashion, and the snares of vice,
From all that can inspire unchaste delight,

To my dear, bleeding family, I write ;

But oh ! my pen the tender task denies ;

And all the daughter rushes to my eyes.

Oft as the paper to my hand I brought,

My hand still trembled at the shock of thought :

Sighs interrupt the story of my woe,

My blushes burn me, and my tears o'erflow ;

But

But nature now insists upon her claim,
 Strikes the fine nerve, and gives me up to shame;
 No more the anxious wish can I restrain,
 No longer silent can your child remain;
 Write—write—I must, my hopes, my fears,
 declare,

And try, once more, to win a father's care :
 Ah scorn not then, Almeria's mournful verse,
 Bestow thy blessing, and revoke thy curse;
 Give to a daughter's wrongs one parent's sigh,
 Nor thou, my mother, my last prayer deny.

Yet where, oh where, shall I the tale begin,
 And where conclude the narrative of sin ?
 How each dire circumstance of guilt disclose,
 Unload my breast, and open all its woes ?
 How, to an injured parent, shall I tell
 The arts by which I strayed, by which I fell ?
 No common language can the scenes express,
 Where every line should mark extreme distress;
 Rotine of words, unequal all, we find
 To paint the feelings of a wounded mind :
 'Tis not the scribbler's vein, the songster's art,
 Nor the wild genius of a vacant heart,
 'Tis

'Tis not the lines that musically flow
 To mark the poet's visionary woe ;
 Nor all the frolics of the tuneful tribe,
 Can such a mighty grief as *mine* describe.

Full oft hath scorpion FANCY to my view
 Imag'd each anguish that a parent knew ;
 At midnight's still and searching hour she came,
 Glar'd round my bed, and chill'd my soul with
 shame,

Each black idea crouded in my sight,
 And gloom'd a chaos on the balmy night.

“ Behold, she said, on the damp bed of
 earth,

Th' unhappy man behold, who gave thee birth ;
 Behold him roll in dust his silver hair,
 While on each muscle sits intense despair ;
 See how the passions vary in his face,
 Tear his old frame, and testify disgrace ;
 Retir'd from home, in silence to complain
 To the pale moon, the veteran tells his pain ;
 Now sinks oppress'd, now sudden starts away,
 Abhors the night, yet sickens at the day.

And

And see, thou guilty daughter ! see, and mourn
The whelming grief that waits thy fire's re-
turn !

Beneath some black'ning yew's sepulchral
gloom,

Where pensive Sorrow seems to court the tomb,
Where tenfold shades repel the light of day,
And ghostly footsteps seem to press the way,
Bent to the ground by mis'ry, and by years,
There view thy bleeding mother bath'd in tears;
Her look disorder'd, and her air all wild,
She beats the breast that fed a worthless child :
And oh ! she cries—

Oh had the fostering milk to poison turn'd,
Some ague shiver'd, or some fever burn'd ;
Had death, she cries, befriended on the morn,
In which these eyes beheld a daughter born ;
Or had th' ETERNAL, seal'd its eyes in night,
Ere it the barrier knew 'twixt wrong and right,
Ne'er had these curses then assailed my head—
Why spring such torments from a lawful
bed !

Now

Now, melted, soften'd, gentler she complains,
 Rage ebbs away, the tide of love remains :
 Then how th' affecting tears each other trace,
 Down the dear furrows of her matron face ;
 But still the anxious mother brings to light,
 Scenes of past joy, and innocent delight ;
 Calls to remembrance each *infantine* bliss,
 The cradle's rapture and the baby's kiss ;
 Each throbbing hope, that caught th' embrace
 sincere,

With every joy that rose in every tear ;
 The beauteous prospect brightning every day,
 The father's fondling, and the mother's play.
 Yet soon she finds again the sad reverse,
 Till harrafs'd nature sinks beneath its curse ;
 Again more fierce—more mad she rends her
 frame,

And loudly brands Almeria with her shame !"
 Here paus'd, and shrunk, the vision from my
 view,

But *Conscience* coloured, as the shade withdrew :
 Pierc'd to the heart, in agony I lay,
 And, all confusion rose, with rising day,

But

But ah ! what hope could morning bring
to me,

What, but the mournful privilege to *see*,
To *view* the pleasures which I could not *share*,
And waste the day in solitude and care ?

The sun more clearly shone on my disgrace,
And mark'd *more deep* the blushes on my face.

Then all enrag'd I curs'd th' abandon'd
hour,

When honour yielded to the traitor's pow'r,
When rash, I scorn'd the angel voice of Truth,
In all the mad simplicity of youth :

When from a father's arms forlorn I stray'd,
And left a mother's tenderness unpaid ;
While nature, duty, precept, all combin'd
'T' fix obedience on a daughter's mind.

Stung at the thought, each vengeance I
design'd,

And weary'd heaven to desecrate mankind !
From room to room distractedly I ran,
The scorn of woman, and the dupe of man.

Alcanor, curst Alcanor ! first I sought
(And, as I past, a fatal dagger caught)

The

My fury soon the smiling villain found,
Struck at his heart, and triumph'd in the
wound :

“ A ruin'd woman gives th' avenging
stroke ! ”—

He reel'd, he fell, he fainted as I spoke.
But soon as human *blood* began to flow,
Soon as it gush'd, obedient to the blow,
Soon as the ruddy stream his cheek forsook,
And death sat struggling in the changing look,
Love, and *the woman*, all at once return'd ;
I felt his anguish, and my rashness mourn'd ;
O'er his pale form I heav'd the bursting sigh,
And watch'd the languors of his fading eye,
To stop the crimson tide my hair I tore,
Kiss'd the deep gash, and wash'd with tears the
gore,

'Twas love,—'twas pity—call it what you
will ;

Where the heart feels,—we *all* are women
still.

But low I bend my knees to pitying Heav'n,
For his recovery to my prayers was giv'n ;

He

He liv'd—to all the rest I was resign'd,
 For murder rack'd no more my tortur'd mind :
 He liv'd—but soon with mean perfidious
 stealth,

He left his prey, and rioted in wealth.

Yet think not now arriv'd the days of joy ;
 Alcanor flatter'd only to destroy ;
 Alike to blast my body, and my mind,
 He robb'd me first, then left me to mankind ;
 Soon from his Janus face the mask he tore,
 The charm ~~was~~ broke, Almeria pleas'd no more :
 The dreadful cheat awhile to *hide* he strove,
 By poor pretences of a partial love,
 Awhile *disguis'd* the surfeits of his heart,
 And top'd, full well, the warm admirer's part ;
 Till tir'd at last, with labouring to conceal,
 And feigning transports which he could not feel,
 He turn'd at once so civilly polite,
 Whate'er I said, indifference made *so right*,
 Such coldness mark'd his manners, and his
 mien,
 My guilt—my ruin—at a glance were seen.

In

I now assum'd in vain a chaster part,
 In vain I struggl'd with a breaking heart,
 Forlorn, I try'd to purify my stain,
 Correct my life, and rise (reform'd) again :
 Pleas'd at the hope, from savage man I flew,
 And sought protection from each friend I knew;
 Each friend, at my approach, shrunk back with
 dread,

Hide, hide, they cry'd, thy pestilential head !
 Then for the meanest servitude I sought,
 But nice suspicion at my figure caught ;
 Too flaunting was my dress, my air too free,
 And deep reserve betok'ning mystery ;
 Some frailty rais'd a doubt, where'er I came,
 And every question flush'd my cheeks with
 shame ;

Conscious of guilt, overshadow'd by pretence :
 'Twas hard to act the *farce* of innocence.
 Oft as I begg'd the servant's lowest place,
 The *treach'rous* colour shifted in my face ;
 The fatal secret glow'd in every look,
 Trembling I stood, and stammering I spoke.

Next

Next, came the views of home into my
mind,

With each dear friend, and relative left behind;
Pardon, and pleasure, started to my thought,
While hope inspir'd forgiveness of my fault :
But soon, too soon, those sweet ideas fled,
And left me begging at each door for bread.
Yet poor indeed was this support to me,
(Ah, had I starv'd on common charity !)
Far other woes and insults were in store,
My fame was lost, and I could lose no more ;
Driv'n to the dreadful precipice of sin,
My brain swam round, and hurl'd me head-
long in.

And now, no pen could picture my distress,
'Twas more, much more than simple wretched-
ness ;

Famine, and guilt, and conscience tore my
heart,

And urg'd me to pursue the wanton's part.
Take then the truth, and learn, ah, learn my
shame :

Such my hard fate—I, welcom'd all that came.

But oh ! no transport mingled in my stains,
 No guilty pleasure ever sooth'd my pains ;
 No vicious hope, indelicately gay,
 Nor warmer passions lull'd my cares away ;
 The flatt'ring compliment fatigu'd my ear,
 While half afraid, I half-conceal'd a tear :
 Whole nights I pass'd insensible of bliss,
 Lost to the loath'd embrace, and odious kiss ;
 Nor wine, nor mirth, the aching heart could fire,
 Nor could the sprightly music ought inspire ;
 Alive to each reflection that oppress'd,
 The more I gain'd, the more I was distress'd ;
 Ev'n in the moment of unblest desire,
 Oft would the wretch complain I wanted fire ;
 Cold as a statue in his arms I lay,
 Wept though the night, and blush'd along
 the day—

Ah think what terrors e'er could equal mine !
 Ah think, and pity—for I once was thine !
 The sweet society of friends was o'er,
 For happier women dare invite no more ;
 And they, at noon, would meet me with alarms,
 Who stole at midnight to my venal arms.

My

My own companions no sweet comfort
brought;

A shameful sett, incapable of thought;
Their wanton passions ne'er could touch my
heart,

For all was looseness, infamy, and art;
No modest maxims suited to improve,
No soft sensations of a chaster love,
No gen'rous prospects of a soul refin'd,
No worthy lessons of a noble mind,
E'er touch'd their bosoms, hardened to their
state:

Charm'd at their arts, and glorying in their
fate;

Some stroke of frolic was their constant theme,
The dreadful oath, and blasphemy extreme,
Th' affected laugh, the rude-retorted lye,
Th' indecent question, and the bold reply;
Even in their dress, their business I could trace,
And broad was stamp'd the Harlot on each face;
O'er every part the shameful trade we spy,
The step audacious, and the rolling eye;
The smile insidious, the look obscene,
The air enticing, and the mincing mein.

With these, alas! a sacrifice I liv'd;
 With these the wages of disgrace receiv'd:
 But heav'n, at length, its vengeance to complete,

Drove me—distemper'd—to the public street.
 For on a time, when light'ning fir'd the air,
 And laid the sable breast of midnight bare;
 When rain and wind assail'd th' unshelter'd head,

That sought in vain—the blessing of a bed;
 Distress'd—diseas'd—I crawl'd to ev'ry door,
 And beg'd, with tears, a shelter for the poor!
 My knees, at length, unable to sustain
 The force of hunger, and the weight of rain,
 Fainting I fell, then stagg'ring rose again,
 And wept, and sigh'd, and hop'd, and rav'd
 in vain!

Then (nor tell then) o'erwhelm'd by sore distress,

To my own hand I look'd for full redress;
 All things were apt—no flatterer to beguile,
 'Twas night—'twas dark—occasion seem'd to smile:—

Where-

Where'er I turn'd, destruction rose to view,
And, on reflection, rising frenzy grew.—
From foolish love, the knife, concealed, I wore,
Which, in my rage, Alcanor's bosom tore ;
Thought press'd on thought—th' unsettled
senses flew,

As from my breast the fatal blade, I drew ;
Still the stain'd point with crimson spots was
dy'd, [cry'd !

“ And this is well—'tis blood for blood,” I
Then did I poise the instrument in air,
Bent to the stroke, and laid my bosom bare :
But ah ! my crimes that instant rose to view,
Disarm'd my purpose—my resolves o'erthrew ;
Fear shook my hand, I flung the weapon by,
Unfit to *live*—I was not fit to *die* !—

Ah ! wretch'd woman, she, who strays for
bread,

And sells the sacred pleasures of the bed ;
Condemn'd to shifts, her reason must despise,
The scorn and pity of the good and wise ;
Condemn'd each call of passion to obey,
And in despite of nature to be gay ;

To force a simper, with a throbbing heart,
 And call to aid the feeble helps of art ;
 Oblig'd to suffer each impure caress,
 The slave of fancy, and the drudge of dress ;
 Compell'd to suit her temper to each taste,
 Scorn'd if too wanton, hated if too chaste ;
 Forc'd with the public whimsy to comply,
 As veers the gale of modern luxury ;
 And oft th' afflicted creature must sustain
 Strokes more severe, yet tremble to complain :
 The felon bawd, a dreadful beast of prey,
 Rules o'er her subjects with despotic sway,
 Trucks for the human form, with fatal pow'r,
 And bargains for her beauties by the hour.
 But should some female in her dang'rous
 train,

Attend the altar of her shame with pain,
 Dispute at length the monster's base controul,
 And dare assert the scruples of her soul ;
 Should she reluctant yield to the disgrace,
 And shew the signs of sorrow in her face,
 Th' imperious abbess frowns her into vice,
 And hates the sinner that grows over-nice.

But

But hear, yet hear, your hapless daughter's
plea,

Some little pity still is due to me.

If to have felt each agony of mind,

To bear the stings which conscience leaves
behind ;

If at each morn to shudder at the light,

Dread the fair day, and fear the coming night ;

If, like the thief, of ev'ry eye afraid,

Anxious I sought the blush-concealing shade ;

If my sad bosom, bursting with its weight,

Bled and bewail'd the hardships of my fate ;

If to have known no joys, yet known all
pains,

Can aught avail to purge my former stains,

Judge not your child,—your suppliant,—too
severe,

But veil her frailties, and bestow a tear !—

Yet has Almeria *now* a juster claim

To seal her pardon, and to close her shame,

Nobler each early trespass to remove,

And hope again the sanction of your love.

THESE HOLY MANSIONS, sacred to our woes,
Which screen from scorn, and hide us from our
foes ;

Which the fallen woman gradually retrieve,
Reform the manners, and the mind relieve ;
Which shield from barbarous man his hapless
prey,

Expunge the spot, and chace the blush away ;
Sooth every sorrow by the pow'r of pray'r,
And half supply a parent's pious care ;
Which lull the flutt'ring pulses to repose,
Each anguish soften, and each wish compose ;
Wean us from scenes that fatally misguide,
And teach the breast to glow with nobler pride :
THESE HOLY MANSIONS have receiv'd your
child,

And here she mourns each passion that beguil'd.
Thrice has the sun his annual beams bestow'd,
And found me here, determin'd—to be *good* :
Already feels my heart a lighter grief,
And each white minute brings me fresh relief ;
Or if by chance my sorrows I renew,
Half claim my crimes, and half belong to you ;
Here

Here then for ever, secret and resign'd,
 Here for its GOD will I prepare my mind;
 Here pass conceal'd, my penitential days,
 And lead a life of piety and praise.

Come then, thou lovely patroness of Fame,
 Thou bright restorer of a ruin'd name,
 Come, fair REPENTANCE, o'er each thought
 preside,

Patient I follow such a heav'nly guide;
 To all thy laws implicitly I bend,
 And call thee sister, saviour, genius, friend!!
 Oh! let me breathe the solemn vow sincere,
 Oh! let Religion consecrate each tear!
 Then, should long life be mercifully giv'n,
 Again the soul may dare to think of heav'n;
 Then, cleans'd from every dark and Ethiop
 stain,

VIRTUE, that dove of peace, shall come again,
 With smoothest wings re-settle on my breast,
 And open prospects of eternal rest.

And yet, before that golden hour arrive,
 Ah! would my injur'd relatives forgive!

Ah!

Ah! could they see this happier turn of fate,
 And view their poor Almeria's chaster state;
 Then would they fondly close her fading eye,
 Bless her last breath, and bid her peaceful die.

Deep in her ward's most venerable gloom,
 Late was a contrite sister, from her room,
 Where long the blushing, pious vot'ress lay,
 And sought a shelter from the shame of day,
 In words half-smother'd by the heaving sigh,
 And voice that spoke despair,—thus heard to
 cry:—

“ Oh! injur'd CHASTITY, thou heavenly
 dame,

Thou spotless guardian of the cherub Fame,
 Who arm'st fair Virtue 'gainst th'insulting foe,
 And in her cheeks commands the rose to blow:
 Had I, oh! had I still thy rules obey'd,
 Despis'd the treach'rous town, and walk'd
 the shade;

Had I each villain stratagem defy'd,
 And scorn'd the flatterer with a decent pride;
 Had I withstood his arrows at my heart,
 Oppos'd each trick, and baffled ev'ry art,

Then

Then lib'ral truth might ev'ry hour employ,
 Each thought be rapture, and each hope be joy ;
 Then lov'd, rever'd, as mother and as wife,
 Blest had I been, in the *pure* vale of life.
 Haply my Edward—Oh! lamented name,
 Once my high boast, before I plung'd in
 shame ;

Haply my Edward, yielding to my charms,
 (Oh ! my smote bosom, whence these new
 alarms ?

Why spring the conscious drops into my eye ?
 Why feels my heart the love-impassion'd sigh ?)
 I dare not speak my promis'd happiness—
 Yet, Edward, couldst thou witness my distress,
 Witness the firm unviolated mind,
 Seduc'd by vice, but not to vice inclin'd ;
 Couldst thou behold the constant-falling tear,
 My pray'rs attest, my self-reproaches hear ;
 Ah! couldst thou think how deeply I bewail,
 How thick enshroud me in the friendly veil ;
 How, in the sacred solitude of night,
 The care of heav'n unceasing I invite,

Breathe

Breathe the warm wish, and pour the fervent
prayer ;

Now dare to hope, and now expect despair :
Couldst thou but see these changes of my
grief,

Surely thy pity would bestow relief.

My Edward's virtue, (for I know his heart,)
The balms of soft compassion would impart,
His breast would mitigate each stern decree,
And Judgment yield to Mercy's milder plea ;
But he is lost—fond wretch, thy plaint give
oe'r—

The dear, the injur'd Edward, is no more,
Or, if he lives—he recollects thy shame,
Scorns thy false vows, and hates th' unwor-
thy flame.”—

Scarce had the pensive child of Sorrow spoke,
When from a neighbouring ward these accents
broke :

“ 'Tis she !—'tis she !—th' unfortunate is
found,

My pulse beats quick—Ah ! save me from
the ground,

Support

Support me—help me—some assistance lend,
 And my faint foot-steps to the mourner bend ;
 She lives !—she lives !”—The unhappy wo-
 man heard,

Shook in each nerve, and trembled at each
 word,

Then swooning sunk at length upon the floor,
 Just as th' afflicted stranger reach'd the door :
 Tottering he entered—caught th' afflicted fair,
 And rais'd her flutt'ring frame, with tend'rest
 care.

“ Ah drooping lily ! rise to life and me,
 And, in this faded form, thy EDWARD see ;
 Recall the lustre in the sparkling eye,
 And bid for ever all thy sorrows fly ;
 Long have I fought thee with a lover's zeal,
 For thee alone I weep, for thee I feel :
 Come then, fair penitent, forget each woe,
 And ev'ry pleasure, ev'ry transport know ;
 Lost be the mem'ry of thy former stain,
 Thy pow'rful pray'rs have wash'd thee white
 again ;

Bury'd

Bury'd be ev'ry anguish in this kiss,
Wake then, oh wake, to virtue and to bliss!"—

This said, he press'd her in a soft embrace,
And the warm blood came flushing to her face,
Now pale retir'd, now ran a deeper red,
Till cheer'd at last, the sweet disorder fled;
A thousand tender questions now succeed,
They smile alternate, and alternate bleed'.
Edward, the chaplain's long try'd friend had
been,

And hence arose the late propitious scene;
The sacred chaplain gave her to his care,
Join'd their kind fates, and left them with a
pray'r.

C H A P. XXXIX.

Before I proceed to set down other matters which fell out to chequer the adventures of my journey, I cannot but observe that about two years after this period I met Mr. Greaves in the Park, with a beautiful young creature under his arm ; and some time afterwards I paid him a visit, when he took me cordially by the hand, and spoke to me as follows.

My dear BENIGNUS, where have you been buried since our last interview? When I told you upon the road the occasion of that melancholy you detected through my efforts to conceal it, you may remember I told you the motive of my journey. Upon my arrival

rival in London, and taking leave of you, I called an hackney-coach, and drove directly to ***—in one word, I found my *daughter*. I felt the fainting penitent in my arms. I received her with an anxiety of joy, a tremor of transport—Oh! BENIGNUS, think for me; colour the scene in the paint of youthful ardour, do justice to nature, and *imagine* the delicacies which were never *spoken*. You have seen my daughter—I never walk without her—and yet, sir, all this joy is dashed with an ingredient of sorrow. The prudes (untouched by the pathos of her penitence) carry an air of ceremonious civility towards my child.—The faded virgins who have never passed the fiery trial of temptation, and a set of haughty matrons, who have every
other

other vice that disgraces the sex, but that of which even nature *predetermined* they should never be guilty—treat my Almeria with a coy and insulting reserve, which goes too near her heart—an heart, BENIGNUS, generous and gentle as—

Here our discourse was interrupted by ALMERIA herself, who came to inform us the chocolate waited for us in the little saloon.

“—Grace was in all her steps,
“ In every action, dignity and love.”

Her own epistle has so pathetically described the misery of her situation, that she has not left room for any thing but pity. And yet who that considers such a creature has been, as it were, *public property*—that reflects,

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how

how many are at this very moment chained down to a necessity equally fore; many of them exposed to the want of that daily bread, which even nightly impurity cannot supply—some of them beating through the streets by the barbarity of their betrayer—some hunted from one hiding place to another, by the vigilance of the bailiff; and all of them liable to contempt, indignity, and distemper—who, I say, that collects together these facts in his mind, can be content with expressing barren compassion? Who can forbear mixing relief with their tears, and blessing the benevolence which first suggested, and still continues their *Asylum*.—

I have a little violated chronology, by placing these transactions somewhat

what out of the order of time, but as my history is written at a venture, and may never visit the world, I have been less cautious of observing critical rules. However, as I by no means design to make a book of digressions, I shall now turn back to Mr. Greaves, who having sat with his eyes closed, was, when he opened them again, much more fitted for society. There are, in truth, certain moments when the music of the *spheres* would be discordant, and when the condolence of our dearest acquaintances is an unwelcome interruption. The human soul settles on her darling subject, descends into herself, and indulges in a luxury, which, bee-like, extracts honey from the poison of calamity. In one of these dispositions was Mr. Greaves,

when he counterfeited repose : he had now reconciled himself to the events he had contemplated, (for he was both a philosopher and a Christian), and with an affability peculiar to well-bred people, begged my pardon for his reveries.

C H A P. XL.

We were now just stepping into our last stage but one, and though the glories of the sun were over, his departing beams were extremely agreeable. Mr. Greaves resumed a look of complacency, and I being willing to keep as clear of the only subject that could perhaps again discompose it, asked what sort of sensations were created
in

in his mind by the story of Mr. Blewitt. Though his history was related (answered my companion) in unpolished language, it contains a folio of valuable facts. But what a pity it is, repeated I, that such mercenary hearts as are lodged in the bosoms of the quaker and grocer, should be, in general, more undisturbed through life, than such as guided the feelings of the generous Mr. Blewitt. Alas! returned the gentleman, you are yet an infant in terrestrial events. I dare swear you have an excellent heart, and I am sure a good understanding, yet you know but little of life. You profess to be travelling in pursuit of *happiness*, and to dedicate your fortune to the service of society. From hence I should conclude that you are

flying from *misery*. I related my adventures at the village. He said if I could not find Contentment in the shade, it was doubtful whether I should meet her in the city. But I fear, continued he, you expect from the world more than it can bestow; you have, perhaps, placed the standard of felicity too high, or your ideas of it are probably a little romantic.

All I want upon earth, replied I, is comprized in three things, friendship, fidelity, and gratitude. At your age, resumed Mr. Greaves (smiling,) I entered the world, animated by the same hopes, and fascinated by the same notions. My head, my hands, and my heart, were busy to derive a reflected blessing to *myself*, by having promoted the blessedness of *others*. To
this

this end I continued in the world till that agonizing accident I have already related.—

At this crisis our chaise, having just ascended a hill, arrived at a very beautiful spot indeed. It was an eminence that topped an extensive prospect, and commanded the scene below, which was composed of intermingled towers, and spires, woods and waters, the verdure of fields, and the variegation of vallies. I could not help ejaculating with some energy—Is it not strange that a world like this, so fitted for the reception and happiness of every being which inhabits it, with such noble capacities of pleasure adapted to each, should nevertheless be the seat of general torment and fretfulness, disaster and distress!—Is it not strange that—that—

The gentleman took hold of my wrist, and fixing his eyes very seriously upon me, spoke in a tone of unusual dignity.

C H A P. XLI.

Never allow amazement to hurry you into expressions unbecoming the character of a Christian; nor let either the insults or miseries you see or feel in the world, make you charge Heaven with the shadow of injustice. Take my word for it, God is not, nor ever was in fault. You see before you, this moment, enough to convince you, that he has done every thing on his part—the sun warms us—the moon in his absence sets off the face

face of the earth, in a sort of shady majesty—the rain descends to bless us—the ground feeds and entertains us, and the ample intentions of universal nature are universally kind and beneficent. MAN has perverted the system—the invention of coins, the passion for negotiation, and the love of barter have extended an ambition of the lowest kind amongst all classes of people. The motive of commerce is no longer rational; and business, which was originally designed to promote health, and circulate interchanged conveniencies, is now for the most part avariciously carried on, to swell the coffers of the individual by impoverishing the species; nay, the mercenary spirit of the times extends to nations and climates divided by the remotest part of the ocean.

ocean. But if you please we will trace this evil *ab origine*. The Almighty created a world, then peopled it, and afterwards found that it was *good*. The management of it was put into the hands of man—not, however, to be too minute, let us take notice, that every thing was once indiscriminately enjoyed. The earth was a common property, and it was fertile without labour—the error of our first parents considerably changed the system, and tillage and drudgery became necessary to subdue a soil, that no longer produced plenty spontaneously. No absolute right however or proprietorship was yet ascertained, and every one fixed on, and cultivated the spot he chose: this miscellaneous participation soon created disorder; for, as
the

the bad passions were now let loose upon the world, indolence seized upon the comforts which had been acquired by industry ; and hence sprang domestic contest and civil dispute, and half mankind were at war. Those that obtained the victory held the conquered as his slave ; and from hence originated those distinctions, which, obtained by rapacity, and kept by force, were after sanctified by political institutions : for upon this (finding men were to be restrained from violence and invasion only by compulsion, terror, and authority,) the laws came in to the assistance of the *stronger* party : the difference betwixt meum and tuum was soon understood, and every individual maintained himself upon that which was now secured
to

to him by certain compacts, to violate which was henceforth to be considered as a punishable crime. By this time an idea of property became sacred and general, and by these means the civilized part of the earth was said to belong, not as formerly, to all alike but to a third part of its inhabitants. Subordination therefore of necessity took place. The pride of power gained ground every day, and one human creature usurped dominion over another, because the distinction was now known betwixt master and servant. From master and servant rose notions of great privileges, and poverty dropt submissive at the knee of riches. Pastorals and Arcadia were no more. Instead of every man dressing the glebe, and turning up the soil
in

in *common*, such as had now dominion over the acres, insisted upon having the essential drudgery they required, performed by those whose fathers might probably *possess* the spot upon which they were to *toil*.——

C H A P. XLII.

—Affairs once settled on these partial principles, resisted every effort of revocation; for who that could eat his bread without sweating his brow, would give up the advantages he had gained- Centuries are now behind us, since things were thus regulated, and every year hath given force and venerableness to the establishment. E-
very

very man has given up the point, and makes the most of his situation : the clown rises early to the task of cultivation, and the master looks indolently on, and receives the profit. Luxury was introduced under these auspices—the beverage of the field, the salad of the brook, and the water of the spring, with the homely apparel that decently veiled and warmed the body, were rejected, and Voluptuousness turned Simplicity blushing away. The moment in which man became possessed of more than was necessary to the wholesome purposes of life ; the moment in which his industry became nerveless, and his love of labour to slacken ; pride soon taught leisure to misuse abundance, and the passions to wanton with authority. Hence,
some

some revelled in the riots of dissipation, others found a pleasure in accumulation, and some better spirits had a bliss in distribution. At length through the natural chain of consequences, we are arrived at the *crisis*. We are polished, populated, and refined in the extreme. Distinctions are so minute, property so tenacious, splendor so superior, and trade so jealous, that no distresses, you observe, should surprise you. Money hath acquired a universal ascendancy, property hath “subdued all things under her feet;” and luxury sickens in despair, because novelty is wanting to give an edge to the blunted appetites. Had the use of a metal-currency been restricted by any reasonable rule of *moderation*, it might have settled the system upon
a no-

a noble principle, for it is equally convenient to the great purposes of benevolence and business. But the lucky and fortunate have run into two extremes so egregiously absurd, that the one opens upon us a fountain of *poisoned pleasures*, and the other a source of *sordid maxims*. The passion for wasting on the one hand, and of hoarding on the other, have not only involved the world in confusion, and thrown the passions into an uproar, but have actually left almost one *half* of the human species naked and starved, to clothe and accommodate the *other*.

C H A P. XLIII.

You have discovered to me, Mr. Greaves, said I, a train of observations of which I had no idea ; but you are preparing to speak, and I would not interrupt you for the universe.

The observations I have made, (continued Mr. Greaves,) have been, no doubt made, (and much more sagaciously,) by many others, for contemplation, philosophy, and science, have now gone very far ; our discoveries in letters and in lands, may perhaps have been pretty equal. There may be yet unknown tracks in speculation ; the intellect may still abound with new reserves of wisdom. There is still, it is

presumed, a *terra incognita*; there may still be an undug mine of *knowledge*. To explore this, must be the labour of some literary Columbus: I pretend not to such skill; and, indeed, can only assure you, that I offer you frankly, on this subject, the unadorned facts which I have collected from early readings and practical observations. You run your eye hastily over the *world*, and then complain that it abounds with misery. After what has been said, should you not be surprised to find a great deal of happiness? and yet, distributed up and down the various parts of it, there really is a very considerable share. That the infelicity grows out of all proportion still *more* considerable cannot easily be determined; for
 though

though the fate of thousands can only be made supportable by the chearful expectation of a *better*, and though the human heart is in general blinded by temporal prejudices, yet coarse as the mass of gratifications are, that *endear* life to the multitude, they are nevertheless gratifications, and receive attachment from custom. The joys of more delicate minds are indeed less extended, and lie in a small compass, being confined to the little circle of the few, whose feelings are softened by nature, and refined by art. But were the agonies of existence, still greater and acuter than they *are*, the DEITY is not the author of it—he made the world—survey it, sir, (even through the shadings of the evening) and tell me, if it is not worthy of a divine

artificer. He made man to inhabit it; has he not bestowed amiable and ample faculties upon him, fitted him equally to enjoy society and solitude, given him a power to derive a pleasure from the freshness of the gale, or from the convivial glass; has not he bestowed upon him eyes to *see* misfortune, an heart to *feel* it, and arms to *remove* it? Has he not implanted in the mind a sympathy between the sexes, so attractive, that, by a kind of magnetic power, we are irresistibly drawn to each other, that life may be perpetuated while love is unpolluted? Has he not given us early ideas of more disinterested attachments, and inspired us with dispositions to philanthropy and friendship! Has he not seated in the bosom a monitor, to compliment

us for every thing that is becoming, and accommodated the taste with endless variety ; is not the ear enchanted by the harmonies of nature, and the smell gratified with perfume ; and, to crown the whole, has he not placed certain intimations in the soul, which assure it, that *however* agreeable the Deity may have rendered the present state, it is but a passage ; and upon the easy terms of our acting properly to *him*, and each *other*, will lead us gently along, till it terminates in *eternity* ?

C H A P. XLIV.

This, my young friend, is a faint sketch of the works and intentions of the Deity; that those works and intentions are abused, can never be imputed to their all-kind Author, but to *man*.

If the beauties and benefits of nature are perverted; if the faculties of the mind and body are obstinately bent to actions evidently contradictory to the purposes for which they were given; if love and friendship are overborne by their opposite passions; and if, as has been before hinted, *interest* carries away the palm from earth and heaven; who but man
is

is chargeable with the consequences of this general inversion of blessings?

The fact is indisputable, sir, said I. I tremble, and I adore; but as Mr. Blewitt seemed always to perform the purposes for which he was born a man, how is it, that he, and others like him, should not pass smoothly through the sea of life? Because, said the gentleman, to carry on the metaphor, when the storm is violent, and the hurricane extreme, it is certain the good and bad sailors will be wrecked alike. Is not that *strange*? said I. Shall gravitation stop as you go by? replied Mr. Greaves. No, sir. The chain of causes and consequences is irrefragable; that innocence should suffer in a world of guilt is morally inevitable; but, depend upon it, the

suffering will not be *ultimately* in vain.

As to Mr. Blewitt, I compassionate and admire him; but he is one of those characters, whose amiable weaknesses expose him to almost *certain poverty*. The poor man was kind to a fault; the world would call him, a good-natured fool. Indeed he was wrong, sir, to indulge the tenderness of his feeling in the extreme; though this cannot be owned, without its implying, at the same time, a very cutting satire against the depravity of human nature, a depravity I have all along taken notice of, as the source of so much disaster and calamity.

Mr. Blewitt did not reflect that, as money is the property by which every passion is gratified, man will
natur-

naturally idolize it as the golden calf; and that, to adopt a few saving maxims, in relation to keeping a part of such property always at command, would be favourable even to his *generosity*; because it must needs be a deep misfortune to find the hand, accustomed to liberality, compelled to contract, when it can give no more. In a country where *appearances* of wealth can claim veneration, where money acquires the chemic quality of turning every thing it approximates into gold, and where that gold is moreover able to array infamy in the robe of integrity, and lead the judgments of the wisest blind-fold as it pleases. In such a country, every *apparent want* of this property, will be liable to neglect and ill treatment,

ment, and every degree of indigence will meet desertion, for this plain reason, because indigence has nothing either to procure or excite the idea of authority, nor to observe those rules which externally distinguish the master from the servant. You will say, perhaps, all this sort of distinction is ridiculous. No doubt of it; but as more than fifty, out of sixty, have adopted such distinctions, as they are actually the general standards of conduct, as they are also *more* than two thousand years old; it is in vain to dispute their propriety, one might as well dispute the customs of a country; tell the Indian, it is indecent to go naked, or that a Toledo, dangling by the side of the Spanish peasant, must be extremely inconvenient. Oeconomy,

mony, therefore, is now almost the only security from contempt, and though it were too narrow a line to tread in the track of the grocer, as *no* real joy could arise from such a rigid policy, neither to lend six-pence, nor borrow six-pence, yet I (and I think my heart not an unfeeling one) have always found it sound prudence, to keep a friend in my *pocket*, and on no terms to lie at the mercy and compassion of another.

CHAP.

C H A P. XLV.

It was now night, and we were in the middle of Finchley Common. The driver bid us secure part of our money, if we had any great quantity about us, for that he saw a fellow lurking by the side of the road, at a little distance. In five seconds we were up with the man, who was groaning piteously upon a grassy hillock. Mr. Greaves, (who knew the arts of his own species) suspected this to be an imposition, and opposed my desire to have him lifted into the chaise. But these ideas were presently removed, for the stranger got up, and coming to the window, presented
not

not a pistol, but—a *purse*. The chaise stopt.

Half an hour ago, gentleman, said the man, a horseman came by me, and I was tempted (to supply the wants of a large family) to demand his money. He put into my hand this purse. I conjure you, gentlemen, if by any stroke of happy chance he should be any part of your company, take it, and return it to him just as I received it. It is my first violation of the laws, either of hospitality or my country. I might possibly return home undiscovered, but I *feel* that I cannot bear it. My conscience is victorious even over my necessities. If you should not know the traveller I have plundered, it is still in your power to do my bleeding soul some
fer-

service. Upon your arrival in London advertise the circumstances of the robbery, take the property, and redeliver it upon the first application. This I cannot do for myself, without throwing myself into the arms of justice; and the situation of a wife, (whom I doat on, with the fate of my poor little ones,) forbid my desertion, so saying, he threw the purse into the chaise and was going to retire.

There was something so very unusual in this new mode of attacking, that it was some time before Mr. Greaves could speak. For my own part I was in a state of mind betwixt trembling and crying. At length Mr. Greaves, who could no longer doubt of the offender's sincerity, invited him
to

to accompany us in the chaise, if he was going to town, pledging himself, at the same time, as a man of honour, not to betray him. The poor man, after the deliberation of a minute, sighed and ascended, though the postilion muttered that we might be transported for harbouring robbers, and might repent it before we got over the common yet.

Our conversation, on the way, was such as might have touched the hardest heart. As soon as we were upon the pavement, the gentleman got out, but not before we had obtained the secret of his address. The driver, seeing him escape, said, he had a great mind to cry stop thief, for that he was sure 'twas hanging matter; and he was not certain whether
he

he should not come to the gallows for it himself, seeing as how he was aiding and *abutting*. In this conjecture he was perfectly prophetic, for upon my travelling the same road, in my way to the village, about six months after, I understood that this very identical nice-minded driver, had actually mounted, some little time before, for being detected in confederating with a gang of highwaymen, to whom he gave intelligence, what company had made appointments to pass by his master's house, in their return to town. The poor man insisted upon leaving the purse, but we did our best to alleviate his miserable condition, by an equal present of five guineas ; I was going to give ten, but Mr. Greaves gently pluckt me by the button, observing
to

to me afterwards, that five, at another opportunity would very likely double their utility.

C H A P. XLVI.

As soon as the man was gone——
There, said Mr. Greaves, is another reason why money should be cautiously parted with—What a noble soul must that gentleman possess, and yet to what deplorable shifts is he reduced—He is a man of education——but 'tis a custom to shun decayed gentlemen, or at best to assist them in a way that must pierce them to the quick.—A beggar who has served a long apprenticeship to the business of whimpering and wailing—who lies down at the

door in despite of denial, and who is, in short, a master of his calling, feels slightly the neglect and abuse of his fellow creature; and if the footman hunts him from one haunt, he hobbles on towards another: but an unfortunate man of *breeding*--a poor creature whose education shines through his rags and dirt, feels the acumen of every insult that is cast upon him--by the random sons of success--in its utmost bitterness, and cannot help reflecting severely on the *inhumanity* of mankind--Take care, therefore, my dear sir, what you do--You are now, I suppose, for the first time, in London--a place of various danger to all men, but more especially to those of your complexion. Pleasure and business seem to lie upon the surface--
and

and at the first glance neither misery or imposture will be discovered—When you rise in the morning, every object will be gay; and curiosity will pay the debt to surrounding splendor; but you will be soon convinced that the *fronti nulla fides* was never more proverbially applicable than to this *great city*. Proceed, therefore with diffidence, and step with caution—Your simplicity and kindness of heart have made me take an interest—almost paternal—in your welfare; and I could rejoice to pass some time with you—but you already know the irresistible—pathetic cause which draws me to town—when that is over, I shall be at your service——In the mean time——(taking my hand with a soft pressure, which brought the water into my eyes)

—once again, let me conjure you to be circumspect. Beware that your bounty, like fire, does not burn itself out, by its own force—*Husband* the blaze, and be sure some sparks remain to warm *yourself*—I give a great deal, to a great many—but, as I have happily a great deal *yet* to bestow, I pass the muster of my friends, whose severest censure is a prophecy that I shall not die rich. But certain it is, if I were to divest myself of every thing, and give the *last penny* to a starving creature, I should be the jest of men, the tittle-tattle of women, and the pity of mankind. Mr. Greaves gave me his direction, stepp'd into a hackney-coach, and bade me farewell.—Some time after this, I paid a visit to the highwayman, who at my departure gave
me

me the following manuscript, which contains some reflections he made upon the transaction at Finchley Common.—But before I introduce this into my history, I think proper to take notice that I had an opportunity to return the purse to the person from whom it was taken.

C H A P. XLVII.

A F R A G M E N T.

CONTAINING

SOLILOQUIES OF A HIGHWAYMAN.

AH ! family forlorn !

The sport of fortune, famine, and mankind ;

Compose thy griefs, Louisa—stop those tears;
Cry not so piteous—spare, oh spare, thy fire,
Nor quite distract thy mother,—hapless babes!
What shall I do ?—which ever way I turn,
Scenes of incessant horror strike my eye :
Bare, barren walls gloom formidably round,
And not a ray of hope is left to cheer ;
Sorrowing and sick, the partner of my fate
Lies on her bed of straw,—beside her, sad
My children dear, cling to her breast, and weep ;
Or prest by hunger, hunt each nook for food,
And

And quite exhausted, climb these knees—in
vain.

How ev'ry asking eye appeals at once !
Ah looks too eloquent !—too plainly marked,
Ye ask for bread—I have no bread to give.
The wants of Nature, frugal as she is,
The little calls and comforts which support
From day to day the feeble life of man,
No *more*, alas ! thy father, can supply !—
To me, the hand of heaven-born Charity
Hard, as the season, gripes—the neighbourhood,
Busy'd or pleas'd, o'erlook a stranger's woe ;
Scarce knows the tenant of th' adjoining house,
What thin partitions shield him from the room
Where Poverty hath fix'd her dread abode.
Oh fatal force of ill-tim'd delicacy,
Which bade we still *conceal* the want extreme,
While yet the decent dress remain'd in store,
To visit my Eugenius *like myself* ;
Now shame, confusion, memory unite
To drive me from his door.—

—— Ah cruel man !

Too barbarous Eugenius—this from thee ?

Have I not screen'd thee from a parent's wrath,
 Shar'd in thy transports, in thy sorrows shar'd?
 Were not our friendships in the cradle form'd,
 Gain'd they not strength and firmness as we grew,
 And dost *thou* shift with fortune's veering gale?
 Dost *thou* survey me with the critic's eye?
 And shun thy friend, because—(oh blush to
 truth,

Oh stain, to human sensibility!)
 Because his tatter'd garments to the wind
 And every passenger, more deep betray
 Th' extremity severe—then fare thee well!
 Quick let me seek my homely shed again,
 Fly from the wretch, who triumphs o'er my
 rags,

On my Louisa's faithful bosom fall,
 Hug to my heart my famish'd fondlings round;
 Together suffer—and together die.—

—————What piles of wealth,
 What loads of riches glitter through each street?
 How thick the toys of fashion croud the eye!
 The lap of luxury can hold no more;
 Fortune, so rapid, rolls the partial show'r,

That

That ev'ry passion sickens with excess,
 And nauseates the banquet meant to charm—
 Yet, what are all these golden scenes to *me*,
 These splendid modish superfluities;
 What are these bright temptations to the *poor*?
 Sooner, alas, will Pride new gild her coach,
 Than bid the warming faggot blaze around
 The hearth where chill Necessity resides—
 But must Louisa, then—our tender babes,—
 Must *they* untimely sink into the grave;
 Must all be victims to a fate so sore?
 The world will nothing give but barren frowns:
 What then remains—There stands the wretch-
 ed hut
 I dare not enter—Heav'n befriend them all!
 What then remains—The night steals on a-
 pace;
 The sick moon labours through the mixing
 clouds:
 Yes—that were well—O dire necessity!—
 It must be so—Despair, do what thou *wilt*!
 —I faint with fear,
 With terror, and fatigue—This forest gloom,
 Made

Made gloomier by the deep'ning shades of night,
 Suits well the sad disorders of my soul :
 The passing owl shrieks horrible her wail,
 And *conscience* broods o'er her prophetic note ;
 Light springs the hare upon the wither'd leaf,
 The rabbit frolicks—and the guilty mind
 Starts at the sound, as at a giant's tread—
 Ah me!—I hear the horse along the road—
 Forgive me, *Providence*—forgive me *Man* !
 I tremble through the heart—the clatt'ring
 hoof

Re-echoes through the wood—the moon appears
 And lights me to *my prey*—

———Stop, traveller !——

Behold a being born like *thee* to live,
 And yet endow'd with fortitude to die,
 Were *his* alone the pang of poverty ;
 But a dear *wife*, now starving far from hence,
 Seven hapless hungry *children* at her side,
 A frowning world, and an ungrateful friend,
 Urge him to actions which his heart abhors :
 Assist us—save us—pity my despair,
 O'erlook my *fault*, and view me as a *man*.

A fel-

A fellow-mortal sues to thee for bread,
 Invites thy charity—invites thy heart :
 Perhaps *thou* art an husband, and a father ;
 Think if *thy* babes, like mine, dejected lay
 And held their little hands to thee for food,
 What wouldst thou have *me* do, wer't thou
 like me,

Driven to distress like mine—oh ! then befriend,
 Make our sad cause your own—I ask no more,
 Nor will I *force* what bounty cannot spare :
 Let me not take assassin-like the boon,
 Which, humbly bending at thy foot, I *beg*.
 Ne'er till this night———

———God speed thee on thy way,
 May plenty ever sit within thy house !
 If thou hast children, angels guard their steps !
 Health scatter roses round each little cheek,
 And Heav'n at last reward thy soul with bliss !

He's gone—and left his purse within my
 hand ;
 Thou much-desir'd, thou often sought in vain,
 Sought while the tears were swimming in my
 eye,

Sought

Sought, but not found—at length, I hold thee
fast.

Swift let me fly upon the wings of love,
And bear the blessing to my fainting babes,
Then, gently take Louisa in my arms,
And whisper to the mourner, happier tidings.

—————Hark ! what noise was that ?

'Twas the dull bittern, booming o'er my head ;
The raven follows her—the dusky air,
Thickens each form upon the cheated sight :
Ha ! something shot across the way, methinks !
'Tis but the shadow of this stripling tree,
That throws its baby-arms as blows the gale.
Each object terrifies Guilt's anxious heart !
The robber trembles at ———

—————What have I said ?

Robber !—well may I start—O heav'n !
What have I done ?

—————Shall then Louisa live on spoil ?
Shall my poor children eat the bread of *theft* ?
And have I, at the peaceful hour of night,
Like some malignant thing that prowls the wood,
Have I—a very *felon* !—sought relief

By

By means like *these* ? And yet the traveller
 Gave what I ask'd, as if in *charity* :
 Perhaps his heart compassionately kind,
 Gave from an impulse it could not resist :
 Perhaps—'twas fear—lest *murder* might ensue :
 Alas, I bore no arms—no blood, I fought !
 How *knew* he that ?—yet sure he might perceive
 The harden'd villain spoke not in my air ;
 Trembling and cold, my hand was join'd with
 his,

My knees shook hard, my feeble accents fail'd,
 The *father's*—*husband's*—tears bedew'd my face,
 And virtue *almost* triumph'd o'er despair !
 Yet strikes the thought severely on my heart,
 The deed was foul !—soft—Let me pause a-
 while !

Again, the moon-beam breaks upon the eye,
 —Guilt bears me to the ground—I faint—I
 fall !

The means of food should still be *honest* means,
 Else were it well to *starve* !———

—————
 ——— Cetera desunt. ———

C H A P. XLVIII.

At this place, madam, we must stop. After BENIGNUS reached London, he met with a great variety of adventures, which are of the most interesting nature; some of them are pathetic, *all* are full of that agonizing knowledge, which is usually purchased at the price of a *broken heart**. The

* If the reader would wish to continue the history of BENIGNUS, from his arrival in London, without the interruption of episodes and speculations, not immediately connected, he will here turn to the first chapter of the Third Volume, from whence the adventures are carried on in a regular series to the end of Volume the Sixth, which concludes the work: and, indeed, those who do not love to anticipate the knowledge of events, will perhaps find their account in reading the five pages directly succeeding,
at

manuscript in my possession is not large, but it is in so small and close a character, that it would yet furnish out at least six window-seat, fashionable volumes. As I have already got beyond the limits of a letter, (unless it had been written upon one of those leaves, which travellers assure us will cover an acre of ground) I must reserve the remainder of his Legend, till another opportunity; at present I can

at the end of the Sixth Volume, as it concisely recapitulates the misfortunes of the hero prior to his desertion of society, but after those that are recorded. The reason of its being placed originally out of the order of time, was only to give a glimpse of BENIGNUS's fate in its ultimate event, and thereby animate the reader to expect with pleasure the farther anecdotes of so extraordinary a character. Previous, however, to the reader's forming any resolution, he is referred to the note at the bottom of page 100 of the present Volume.

only

only spare my unfortunate hermit, a few more pages for an extract or two from the record.

THE HISTORY,

Continued from the 685th Chapter.

I was now in the 37th year of my age, as emaciated, unhappy, desolate a creature as ever *reluctantly* crawled on the bosom of the earth; the greatest part of my fortune was gone, the remainder was in bad hands, my reputation was ruined, and my health was totally destroyed. The friend, whom I most loved, and most trusted, deceived me; and yet it was
the

the constant aim and center of all my views to derive *happiness* from *goodness*. One solitary 20l. bank note, which was paid me in full for a debt of 500l. was all I have left; prisons, crosses, aspersions, and cruelties, had driven me to the point of death; society became dreadful to me, and indeed my consumption had taken such hold of me, that *I* became dreadful to society. I bought a sorry mule, twelve sacks of common biscuit, wrapt up my exhausted limbs in a horseman's coat, left the detested town, and took the road to this forest.

The ideas of a despairing mind are generally wild and violent. Mine were the direct contrary; I was not desperate, but I was dying; and I was unwilling to lay my bones where my

body and my mind had been equally lacerated : at the edge of the wood I stopt ; every part was almost inaccessible, and appeared the more so, as the moon-beam threw a shade deeper on it ; I knew not at what part to enter.

Here, madam, we must make a second gap in the history, and continue it from

C H A P. DCCLXX.

Being the last of the HISTORY.

I have now been an inhabitant of the forest only five weeks. I have got a few birds ; my old dog, so frequently mentioned in the latter part of my
his-

history; a cat that strolled one day into my cottage, which is nothing better than a collection of sticks closely compacted, sodded at the top, and carpetted with sacks at the bottom. I am at the extremity; God has permitted me to finish my adventures, wherein every thing that happened to me in the *world*, or in the *wood*, is accounted for. I find I am no longer able to hold the pen; farewell then that which has been my chief amusement, farewell writing, the hand of death is upon me; I will now hang my label on the door.

I have been at the point of death three days : I am too weak to rise; my store-box is empty; my poor brutes are falling famished around me;

the pen, (which I laid by the head of my sack) is held so faintly, that I can scarcely mark the fate of my last moments ; I make random efforts on the paper, and I die, a fatal example, that no sorrows, no disappointment, no barbarities, should, at any time, have power to drive a man totally from his species; the silver chord, that tied the soul to the body, is broken. I am —————

S E C T I.

But before we pursue the History of Benignus, I shall beg your ladyship's leave to return to our * fancy-pieces ;

* Of these fancy-pieces, some pathetic, and others humorous, in the manner of the former part of
volume

amongst these I must number a little piece of poetry, wrote a year after leaving school. I shall present your ladyship with this, with all the marks of juvenility about it.

volume the first, consist the remainder of this second volume. If the reader wishes to make a pause in the Story of the unfortunate Benignus, he may peruse these fancy-pieces, which, it is believed, are written to the heart; if he is interested in the welfare of the hero, in whose favour, to use the language of an excellent life-writer, he is prepossessed; if he espouses his cause, sympathises with him in distress; if his humane passions are inflamed, and his attention is not tired, he would do well to reserve scenes of imagination for a less engaged moment, and catch up the third volume of this history without delay, because in that he may again join company with the now separated Benignus.

S E C T: II.

O D E

TO A SCHOOL-FELLOW.

HAIL to the harmless seats of happy youth!
 To the smooth hours of genuine pleasure,
 hail !

Hail to transport—hail to truth,
 When jocund health blew fresh in ev'ry gale,
 And reckless pastime spread the frolic sail !—
 Backwards, dear youth—a little cast thine eye,
 Let pregnant fancy paint each early scene,
 And pencil fair our boyish days,
 The lively hope that crown'd the revel
 reign :

Our thousand pleasures--thousand plays!--
 If these thou hast forgot—forbear to sigh :
 But if thou call'st to mind—bestow thy sympathy.

Recall

Recall the hour that set us free
 From gerunds, pronouns, prosody,
 Recall the bliss that throb'd the heart,
 When the glad summons bade us freely start,
 'Twas heaven, and holiday—
 And every little soul was in its May !

'Tis true, we dealt in trifles then,
 But trifles catch more mighty men ;
 Cheap were the baby-toys we chose,
 Blithe as the ruddy morn we rose,
 And slept at night, with—all a boy's repose.
 We knew not *man's* amusements wild,
 Our wishes were the wishes of a *child*.

What tho' (for we are heirs of pain,
 Even from cradle, fore we sigh,
 And as the hill of life we gain,
 More rugged is the road—more sharp the misery).

What tho' some vexing troubles chose
 Our sports to discompose ;

What tho' the light'ning of the master's eye,
 The threatning tone, the brow austere,
 Bespoke disafter near,
 And pedagogal tyranny :
 Tho' knotty points of learned lore distrest,
 Puzzled the head, and throb'd the breast ;
 Tho' the keen scourge—of dreadful size !
 Acutely whipt to make us wise ;
 The fleeting anguish never reach'd the heart,
 But the faint cries were transient as the smart.

Soon as the sense of pain was o'er,
 Suspended happiness return'd,
 The passing tear was seen no more.
 The birchen sceptre lost its power,
 For mirth resum'd the vacant hour,
 And the gay stripling laughs at what he
 mourn'd !

The soldier thus, in heat of wars,
 Sunk by the sudden blow to ground,
 Still cover'd o'er with various scars,
 Ere well the anguish leaves the wound,

Soon

Soon as he gains the strand
 That girds his native land,
 With triumph he recounts the hardy fray,
 Shews the deep mark, where many a bare bone
 lay ;
 And smiles at all the blood-shed of the day.

Canst thou, my friend, recall these joys,
 Yet cease to wish we still were boys ?
 Think on the deep complottings of our
 crew,
 Scheme upon scheme, some arch exploit
 in view,
 The merry moon-shine pranks we play'd,
 The little thefts at evening's fall ;
 The truant rambles we advent'rous made,
 When bold we scal'd the orchard wall.
 Where, as we reach the ruddy bough,
 On which the fair temptations grow,
 One plucks the fruit—and one receives
 below !
 Ah miniature exact of man !
 Nature's full length, is still on childhood's plan,
 But

But brighter colours deck the youth,
Rapture and health, vivacity and truth,
Soft too are then the shades of care,
And art wants time to paint
The figures of despair !

Your ladyship will now perhaps pay
a visit with me to my animals ; poor
creatures, they have been a long time
neglected ; to this end we must return
to my cottage : there it is, madam !
very properly situated for a page of
description, a fancy-piece of itself.
There is so much poetry to edge the
borders of prose in this little subject
that for the soul of me I cannot enter
the doors, without indulging the
vanity of drawing

S E C T. III.

A PICTURE OF THE PREMISES.

Did ever your ladyship behold the slope of any wood more beautiful than that, which rises, by soft gradations, from the spot which my cottage occupies, to the warm boundary of hills, which form a vegetable screen for the valley? Every bush is blooming with perfume, and every tree is pendent with blossoms; the hand of nature has woven me a carpet, so diversified in colours, and so fantastically figured, that the utmost pride of Turkey droops even to dulness, on the comparison; and hark! madam, the note of pleasure affords for the *ear* as fair a banquet

banquet as the prospects of summer afford for the *eye*. Murmuring along the brake, (intercepted in its passage by the pebbles) a small rill of water winds its way along the grove, and at last is heard bubbling into the brook at the bottom : the river rolls majestically flow at a little distance ; and a stately swan (the empress of the tide !) sails self-important on its bosom. On the left hand is a flock at feed, while some of the lambkins are flumbering in the sun, and some frisking round the bushes ; on the right, the musicians of the season are warbling in the concert, and the pauses of harmony are filled by the sonorous splash of the neighbouring water-mill. The green sod embellishes the seat round my hut ; the woodbine comes nodding into

into my casement, and vegetation goes smiling, even to my door ; such is the outside of my little place.

And now I submit the matter to your ladyship ; could I with any sort of justice to myself, or it, have passed into the sweet hut, without pulling you one moment by the ruffle, to shew you how prettily I stood ; and that neither I, nor my society, left the town without being decently provided for in the country.

S E C T. IV.

Upon reading over the description of my cottage a *second time*, I cannot help thinking it would make a smart morsel for the magazines, or for the
next

next poetical nosegay Mr. Doddsley shall think fit to gather from the fugitive flowers of this *literary land*; but as I was fearful of detaining your ladyship, I have spoken of the matter hastily, and yet I do not think, a single thing wanting to complete (when turned into verse) a pastoral poem; nay, I am farther satisfied that, what with the title, the advertisement, the preface, the dedication, the argument, and the introduction, it would be quite large enough for a half-crown pamphlet, especially when your ladyship takes two points into consideration: first, that four lines of prose will, at any time, make fourteen of poetry; and secondly, that the present taste of printing is so extremely white and delicate, that a
 very

very *few* lines will go a *great* way; infomuch, that upon a pretty nice calculation it would be found, that six penny-worth of sense, and twelve penny-worth of paper, (allowing for fashionable margins) will, when properly manufactured, produce half a dozen pocket volumes, at the *moderate* price of three shillings per volume. We will now, madam, step into

S E C T. V.

T H E H U T.

Oh force of animal gratitude! how the creatures croud around us! we have left them but a few hours, and they are ready to devour us with their fondness; even the superannuated
pointer

pointer bestirs himself on this occasion; poor fellow, he is the son of an unhappy fire, whose story goes (I verily think,) as near to the heart as any that was ever recorded, and yet I am afraid I shall hurry your ladyship too quickly back into the region of gloomy sentiments, should I relate it; but there is a pleasure even in the anxieties of sympathy; and as the story is now fresh in my memory, and my letter drawing to the end, it were a pity to suppress it.

S E C T. VI.

PASSAGES of a TRUE STORY.

Oh Romeo, Romeo, what a creature wert thou! how courteous, how sagacious, how well tempered!

He

He was descended, madam, from a glorious line; the son of a noble stock, venerable from his pedigree, royal in his extraction, and, to crown his character, he was the favourite companion of a dear friend of mine, who is now no more.

In one of the sharpest days, and yet one of the fairest that winter could produce, the youthful Flavian prepared, with his gun and his Romeo, to take the diversions of the field; happiest of men, happiest of dogs. They were particularly lucky, and it was a day of eminent success; this pointed the game, that brought it to the ground; the net was soon crouded with the spoil; but as Flavian was returning---

Notwithstanding the elevation of your rank, your ladyship must have had frequent occasion to deplore the capricious uncertainty of sublunary enjoyments; must have seen the eye that in the present moment sparkled with hope, in the next rolling with despair, and tears usurp the features, which an hour before were dimpled by joy; this is indeed so hacknied and universal a fact, that I should beg your pardon for digressing into a parenthesis about it.

As Flavian was returning to his house, and Romeo was ranging the skirts of a copse, rather in the way of wantonness than industry, knowing, perhaps, that the business of the day was already done, just as the winding of the thicket meandered into an
elbow

elbow that jutted into the field, Romeo broke short his step, and stood fixed in an attitude, which put Flavian on his guard. In the next instant an hare started from the bushes, and ran trembling to the opposite hedge-row; on the other side of which was a shaded lane, that led to Flavian's villa. There is an enthusiasm, which seizes the sportsman at the sight of sudden game; with that sort of inspiration was Flavian now seized, who, levelling his gun to the mark (with an aim too fatally erring) deposited the charge into the bosom of ——*
——*.

Mighty God! I want fortitude to go on!

Flavian, madam, had—a wife; unhappily for him, she was tempted by

the brightness of the morning, and the report of his fowling-piece at no great distance, to strole from her house, and, as was sometimes her tender custom, intended to hasten his return, not only to enjoy his society, but to put an end to the depredations of the day. The sound of the gun had scarcely died upon the air, when a sound of a different kind saluted the ear: Flavian dashed through the hedge, and saw his Maria extended along the path-way, which was overhung by the bushes, and her bosom was bathed in that blood, which she now found had been shed by her husband. In pursuing the game, Romeo first discovered his mistress, and, with his four feet upon her lap, was mourning over her wounds: the agony was

so legible in his countenance, that if he had the power of speech, it would have been impossible to describe it.

The husband, ah, madam ! In these cases, as I have just remarked, the brute and the man are alike ; since both must deliver over to the dumb sensations of the heart, a language neither science nor instinct can teach them to articulate ; all that can be said or done is dull painting ; he struck his breast, cast an eye of astonishment at heaven, and fell speechless by her side ; the poor woman saw his agony, made an effort to embrace him, but sunk exhausted on his breast.

A servant of Flavian's, who had been on a message, now appeared upon the road in the lane ; Romeo ran to him, leaped round his horse, looked

up to the man, and led the way to the scene of death. The servant rode away on the spur, to alarm the family at the mansion-house; in the mean time, the last endearments were faintly interchanged betwixt Flavian and Maria; to the latter, articulation was soon denied, but she, by some means, got her husband in her arms, and in that situation expired; the distress of Flavian affected not even yet his tongue; the dear body, mangled as it was, could not be torn from him, and both he, and the unhappy lady, were carried to that apartment, from which they had parted a few hours before, in the highest gaiety of wedded hearts, and in the warmest ardours of youthful expectation. And now comes on the business of poor Romeo.

Flavian

Flavian fell sick, Romeo was the very centinel of his door, and the nurse of his chamber; a fever followed, which at length touched Flavian on the brain, and, in the violence of the delirium, he struck his poor attendant Romeo, who, so far from resenting the blow, licked lovingly the hand that gave it. Madness shifted into melancholy; Romeo was still by the side of the bed, fearful to step even on the carpet: "He trod, as if in fear he trod."

After this, the fever returned, and, burning its way to the heart, in a few days defied physic, and his ashes were united to those of his beloved Maria. From the room in which he died neither force or contrivance could seduce Romeo, till the moment in which he

was put into the coffin, and the people concerned in his funeral began to deem it necessary to destroy the dog: Romeo, however, resisted all their measures, but especially their carrying him away; at length he suffered it, but still followed them close, and was, perhaps, the most sincere mourner.

When Flavian was committed to the earth, his faithful Romeo took dominion of the spot, and was the sentry of his grave; grief and hunger had exhausted every thing but his attachment; yet he never was heard to whine, but, after laying till nature could do no more, he was at length found dead at the foot of the tomb. Thus the master expired, and the servant found it impossible to survive him.

Your

Your ladyship sheds a tear to the complicated misfortunes of this family. I congratulate you upon it. Fie upon the heart that is ashamed to feel ; and withered be the cheek, that (in defiance of the impulses of nature) is kept dry by the maxims of fashion !

But neither the above story, madam, nor any other, nor any other, in the present volumes, were introduced merely to excite sensibility. It finds a place amongst these pages, as a suitable vehicle for

SECT.

S E C T. VII.

SOME MORAL OPINIONS.

In the few anecdotes of Benignus, were briefly shewn that, nine times out of ten, To be good in this world, Was not the way—to be happy.

That is—not to be happy, if our behaviour, and its consequences, were to take their rewards from the returns of our fellow-creatures in general. The reason assigned for this, is the only true reason that can be assigned, the degenerate state of maxims and manners, and the *want of discretion* in our *benevolent actions*.

All the evils, therefore, which are of a malignant nature, all such as
arise

arise from the perversion of money, or turbulence of passions, are totally to be imputed to human sources : but there are other evils (and some extremely fore) that fall out, to wake goodness no security for worldly happiness ; these (I mean such as absolutely are placed beyond the reach, or prevention of man,) are certainly the acts of the Deity ; we call them under the vague name of *accidents* ; they light equally on man and beast, and every thing that hath an existence ; and (for ought we can tell) they may possibly affect vegetation, and carry the distress beyond the scale that is animated. As great proportions of that misery, which cloggs the path of life, therefore, is caused by the bad propensities of men, so it must of necessity

cessity be admitted, that the road, which leads from this world to the next, is made additionally wearisome and heavy, by the permission of some power, superior to theirs. It is peculiar to the most rational animal (as he is called), to perceive this, though he cannot adequately account for it: to account for it, indeed, has been the labour of the most shining understandings; divines, moralists, theologists, philosophers, metaphysicians, and poets, have exerted every nerve, in every age, upon the subject. The most pious and industrious of these all concur in their sentiments, and, conclude with the same ideas. They say

That, though to be good may not be rewarded in general with the gratitude

titude of our fellow-creatures, and that virtuous characters are commonly insulted by the multitude (who are creatures of ignorance and interest); yet a man is sufficiently rewarded for his rectitude (even in this world), by the endearing society of men like himself; besides which, the comforts of conscience are more than a counterbalance for the severest sufferings, to which are added the chearful prospects of futurity.

That, with respect to all those numberless disasters, which fall out in despite of human sagacity, the answer always has been, and still continues to be this, They are trials, &c. &c.

There is indisputably a great deal of consolatory truth in both these conclusions.

clussions. Some part of the argument however is liable to objection; zeal will very often run away with the powers of reflection. The system of men of religious moderation is comprized in the short passages above. More intemperate people, who call themselves free-thinkers, have under that title, assumed a privilege to argue very boldly on the other side of the question. Some have contended, that if vice is natural to the heart of man, it must be an effort as ridiculous as impossible to resist it; the inference is, that God is the sole origin of evil, and that he certainly would not punish his creatures for yielding to a necessity in their nature; or otherwise, that good and evil arise like every thing else, out of the whimsical vagaries of
abso-

absolute chance. Others, madam, of our own nation say, it would be an act of benevolence to withdraw evil from every part of the globe; another asserts, that vices and miseries of all kinds are peculiar benefits, and that, to a trading nation especially, they are the very main spring in the political machine. There have also been some who exculpate every wickedness in man at the risque of lodging the cause and fault of the *whole* upon the *Deity*. A much admired countryman of our own, madam, has, in a composition that contains the most poetical philosophy in our language, advanced seriously an opposite sentiment, and terminates the whole by declaring, "whatever is, is right." My own opinions, on this important subject,

subject, are, I dare say, like those of your ladyship ; I think every work of God vindicable ; but I do not think some of them reconcilable to reason, by the beaten mode of defending them. There are, at this instant, thousands of our amiable fellow-creatures in the world (bad as it is) struggling with the storms of fate, without finding relief in the society of men like themselves ; for it will be easy to prove, that even the tenderest and worthiest connexions of a man, fly off in the hour of necessity ; nor will it be more difficult to shew, (if it could possibly need an instance beyond the reach of any one's experience) that poverty (in the extreme) is often accompanied with the loss of reputation. Those are yet
babies

babies in the world, who suppose half the bad reports they hear of men, are the consequences of their ill conduct : for the fact is, that there are a pretty equal number of wretches deserted by their friends (because their unworthiness unfitted them for what is called virtuous society) and of wretches deserted, because their ill-luck in life drove them too often against the purses of their acquaintance ; for I must once again repeat, that the abuse of riches has made avarice the ruling vice, and there is sometimes the highest degree of avarice even in dissipation—self still settles at the bottom. Nor are even the comforts of conscience, always sufficient to bear a man up, against the insults of mankind : for many of our species are so pelted by

the tempests of life, that the purest integrity, and the sweetest reflections *resulting* from that integrity, are obliged to give way to the misfortunes which croud incessantly upon them. Sorrow treads fast upon sorrow, calamity strikes upon calamity, and accident comes stumbling so rapidly upon accident, that the whole business of the *soul* is to shift for the necessities of the *body*; or to try the force of its religion, to accommodate itself with proper patience, to bear its allotment without plunging into the errors of despair. Instances of this kind are extremely numerous. Men indeed who are plumped by prosperity, and indolently loiter out an unserviceable existence in the easy chair of voluptuousness; and women who
are

are tied down to a peculiar set of amusements, ideas, and pursuits, may see this matter in the light, which their contracted teachers have *taught* them to see it. But the sons and daughters of luck and luxury, are the worst judges of the sons and daughters of misfortune. The grand amulet—the only *effectual* remedy of sorrow remains behind, and that is a *universal* one—ample enough for the cure of misery, even though *misery* was universal; *the prospects of futurity*, when friends forsake us, foes oppress us, and conscience is cowed by constant adversity, those, madam, and those only, prevent despair, and point to felicity. With regard to the evils of accident, nothing but those can reconcile them with the line of our most

natural notions of eternal goodness; and those do reconcile them to the sublimest idea that ever was conceived of it. But let us turn aside from argument, and look upon life for exemplary

S E C T . VIII.

PROOF OF THIS MATTER

Among other accidents that could only be reconciled by the *prospects of futurity*, is the story and fate of Flavian, and his family—how agrees it—might we argue—(*but* for those prospects) with the beneficence of the Creator to afflict so much morality and goodness, without any *apparent* cause. In short, madam, the human soul
ebbs

ebbs and flows like the ocean, though not with the same regularity. There is no purity, nor any devotion, but sometimes wavers for a *moment* : believe me, there are periods when the most apostolic faith staggers, aye, and that upon principle ; for the better the mind, the greater is its occasional agitation. Divines tell us, it is sinful. I insist, it is unavoidable, and I will, in this case, be so bold to enter a caveat against all the cassocks in the kingdom. There is an intricacy in the events of the world, which will on the first view constantly appear mysterious. They frequently put the human intellect upon the puzzle. We want not books, or arguments, to teach us ambiguities ; for every *rational sense* about us presses the *whys*

and *wherefores* spontaneously and irresistibly upon us. It is not, madam, the vanity of penetration; it is merely the curiosity and inquiring propensity of nature.

It was with a propriety peculiar to the classic genius of Mr. Addison, that he called these labyrinths of Providence, that so frequently cross the lines of life—"a regular confusion." Let us examine that celebrated expression, and it may perhaps lead us into a train of thought, which may throw new light on our present subjects, both with relation to man and brute. The eye of God, (and possibly the eyes of his angels) may see the regularity, unintangled in the confusion. But what proves this more, than that finite can by

no means, measure with infinite? To man's imperfect vision, many events already hinted at in this letter, and many more which might be brought into the catalogue of instances, are not only repugnant to every moral, natural, or conscientious law (were we to decide of them by the narrow line of human justice), but are utterly opposite to our own ideas of common compassion. Still farther. I beg leave to advance the matter *much* farther. It is a fact, (attested by the tears and agonies of a mournful multitude) that the horrid variety of miseries which attack the attention on all sides, would tempt the soberest head, and the devoutest heart, in the world, to suspect that the affairs of that world were totally eclipsed in confusion,

sion, without a single ray of apparent regularity : judging (as was observed above) and faintly guided through *the dark*, only by the twilight glimmerings of natural reason, and natural equity.

To prove this, there arise at once so many instances, that choice is perplexed in variety. Let us quit the fire-side, madam, for half an hour, and, turning our eyes on the active world, walk leisurely along to survey the great scenes that are fleeting before us, If it is agreeable to your ladyship, we will make

S E C T. IX.

A MORAL, AND SENTIMENTAL
EXCURSION,

And London shall be the boundary of our ramble. That stupendous mass of building contains every thing for our purpose: perhaps, there never was more happiness and misery crowded together upon the same space of ground, since the foundations of the world! In the first place (for your ladyship must suppose yourself endowed with a power of stepping into whatever places you think proper, during this tour)—we will pay a visit to that wretched looking house; and though

I am

I am taking you into those sad retreats, which are very uncusomary to people of fashion, yet we will walk up the broken stairs, and open the door of that chamber. Pray survey it with a critical eye. The spectre Famine hath usurped the seat of Plenty. There are seven small children, without any symptoms of the health, and rosy hilarity, which usually attends the most untroubled period of life: the pale young woman, whose arm is round one of the youngest, with one (still smaller) which she is dandling on her knee, is their mother; and that tottering phantom of a man, whom age hath rendered feeble than the feeblest of the children, is the father of that mother—I beg pardon: I have overlooked a personage, of no small consequence.

sequence. At the side of the broken lattice you behold, one of the king's officers. He has a paper in his hand, a pen in his mouth, and his eyes are running up and down the room in the most eager dispatch. For once, we will dispense with fashionable ceremonies, and peep over his left shoulder. This method has enabled us to read, what he entitles

AN INVENTORY.

One table,—split in the left lid,
and two of the joints wanting.

One cradle.

A small stool.

An oyster-barrel.

One go-cart.

Three chairs,—two without backs,
the rush rotten.

One

One child's chair,—the bottom almost gone.

Four knives.—One without a haft.

D^o forks—two of the tongs broken.

One fifth of an iron poker.

A box-iron.

One cinder-sifter—terribly battered,

And one wooden fender—burnt in six places.

N.B. A small tea chest—lock lost

—the canisters bruised.—

December 12th.

To be carried off or sold the 18th instant.

—Sold! Heavens! Hush, madam,

—I perceive you are prepared with many questions. The answers are melancholy to every thing you can say. See, madam, the good man has discharged his duty (in which we must bear

bear testimony he was conscientiously particular) and is going out of the room: we will follow his example; ah, madam! the tears are swimming round your eye, and your hand is in your pocket. There then, God prosper you with it, poor woman: see if one of the infants, is not quite taken with the flowers upon your ladyship's gown; another faintly plucks me by the skirt of my coat, and is paying strong court to my buttons; the mother is upon her knees to you, she thinks and looks the gratitude she is unable to speak: let us hurry away before the scene becomes too interesting——even the smoky air of one of the most smoky streets of the suburbs, is chearful and salubrious, to the oppression I felt in the chamber we
have

have just left: a coach will carry us to a more agreeable part of the town, inhabited by different sort of people.

S E C T. X.

In this square we will stop, for here is breathing room. Hark, how the roll of the chariots, the report of the horses feet, and the echo of the doors prepare us for the magnificence of fashion. We are now in the very region of finery. As sudden transitions have always a great effect, I will now take your ladyship into a very splendid apartment; these folding-doors will admit us, *because* we shall not look as if we had no doors of our own; for in all cases of that sort, there
is

is a peculiar difficulty in getting on the other side of the knocker, which, for the most part, is supported in the jaws of some monster, that seems to say to every necessitous crawler, or even to every shabby gentleman, Come if you dare, approach, and be devoured! Luckily for us, madam, there is always another monster appears, the instant the door opens, and as he constantly acts upon the liberal principles of Cerberus, we will give him, a sufficient sop, upon which he will become immediately so tame that he will make the hinges echo again, even though we were come to dun his keeper. The arts of opening a door, and delivering a message, are sciences that would very well fill a volume; I shall therefore
certainly

certainly stand excused for having scribbled only a page upon the subject.

We are now walking up the geometrical stairs; that door opening upon another door, will lead us to another green door, which will lead us to the apartment, where the family are assembled at breakfast. How beautifully and warmly the whole room is carpeted, and cushioned. We perceive at the table three hearty children, a lady of an elegant figure, and a gentleman in his night-gown and slippers. Bless me! how the servants bow; what a profusion of gilding and plate! and see, madam, the youngest boy is actually tossing an handful of guineas up and down the floor by way of amusement. I heartily wish the poor children we have just left, had the trouble

trouble to pick them up for my young master. If your ladyship will please to retire, I will tell you something, as you go along, worth hearing, of this family.

S E C T. XI.

The gentleman, madam, whom you saw in the morning-dress, is one of those human beings Providence hath, for some wise end, permitted to hold the happiness and comforts of a great many other human beings in his possession. In the English language he is known by the name of a *creditor*, the moral definition of which term is simply this; a man who having the good things of this life in great abundance,

dance, distributes a small portion of those good things to such as are destitute: a kind of benevolence, that would reflect dignity upon the author were it not liable to a trifling circumstance, which some will think a drawback upon it; for the benefactor commonly chuses to take in return a small slip of paper, by virtue of which he can torment, and have the person benefitted, as it were, on the hip, at a moment's warning; and in fault of payment, acquires full authority, either to seize the body, and deposit it in a jail; or take possession of the goods, and turn the body into the street. In some parts of the future history of Benignus, will be delineated the whole and extensive science of man-catching, wherein will be
 shewn

shewn, that the slave-trade flourishes surprisingly in Great Britain, and that the traffic of buying and selling the human species is daily gaining ground, through every part of his majesty's dominions: and this is esteemed so curious and original a part of the manuscript, that I expect a prodigious consideration for the copy. In the above work, however, a proper and nice distinction is made, as to the nature and contraction of debts, insomuch that it will infallibly prove a sure guide to creditor, debtor, and bailiff, for those, madam, are the principal agents in this humane and excellent art. I cannot quit this subject without presenting your ladyship, with a slight specimen of the above sort of merchandise. The business is frequently

transacted thus : one man in distress, borrows (in an humble tone, with his hat under his arm, and in all the confusion of want) of another man, in no distress whatever, value forty-shillings : (as misfortune is apt to expect a sunshiny day, even in the midst of hard weather,) Disappointment trips up the heel of Hope, and the day of restitution runs by, in which the said forty shillings remain, like the handwriting on the wall, against him. From that moment the bargain is struck ; the purchaser demands his property, and, as the transaction is sanctified by the laws of the land, the carcase is at his discretion : it is dragged from its friends, and so cautiously prevented from taking cold in the open air, that it is put very tenderly under

under lock and key, and bar and bolt, that it is in a perfect cage : here a parcel of crows are suffered to peck at it, which are a kind of guarantees to the purchaser of the body.

S E C T. XII.

And now we will go on with our story. The gay spark who is the subject of our present enquiry, became a creditor to the poverty-struck family whom we saw in the suburbs of the town, by being landlord or possessor of a range of ruins, among which is the uncomfortable hut we described. The master of that hut, (who is at present out of the way) is amongst the number of those against

whose tranquility the dark events of this life were perpetually pointed. The consequence of this (which is pretty frequently the case) was the desertion of acquaintances, and the distance of friends, and he was often accused of obliquity, though in truth he seldom deviated into those crooked paths, which justly excite agony and shame. He was unable to answer the inclinations of his heart, and was two years in arrear for the rent. One morning the poor man's wife waited at the door of Sophron (for so will we call him) and delivered an apology: by great chance the porter thought fit to deliver it immediately, and by a chance still greater, the young woman was admitted into the presence chamber, where Sophron was indulging

indulging the surfeiting luxuries of his situation. Distress had not, at that time, wholly destroyed the beauty which was naturally extraordinary in her: she caught the fancy of the present moment. Sophron proposed an immediate treaty, and offered moreover a purse for the relief of her starving family. Generous as this might be, she flatly refused it. As Sophron was not much accustomed to the language of denial, and thought besides, his offer not only an honour but a liberality, he ordered her hastily to depart. She did so, and in going home felt one of those sensations, which for a moment relieves the sense of the worst condition, by the triumph of the conscience. She told the whole to her husband, and in his rewarding

embrace she felt those sensations revived. But where misery is constantly shifting from one sorrow to another, the pleasures of reflection can seldom have leisure to play. What was the result of this matter!—withdraw a moment, madam, to that gloomy-looking pile, the common receptacle, the promiscuous deposit of distress and infamy for a length of years; we will wind up the dreadful stairs. Alas! how does novelty give force to objects, which custom has rendered unnoticed! the grating of the bars, the jingle of the keys, and the clank of the chains, I see, terrify your ladyship; pray stop awhile,—in that dismal cell, behold the consequence of a wife's unseasonable chastity, and virtue, there lies the husband:

band : Sophron had once risked, as he called it, the loan of ten guineas ; for that sum he was arrested, and for the rent his goods will shortly be sold.

S E C T. XIII.

And here, madam, let me pay a compliment to the justice, sagacity, and christianity of our law-makers, law-makers of the most refined, and polished nation under heaven, who have assigned to unfortunate men, who owe and have the least money, a residence of the greatest gloom, hardship, and discredit, amongst wretches who have broken at midnight into our houses, assassins
who

who have shed the blood of our species, and robbers who commit hostilities upon the road. Encircled by such associates is the father; his children are famished at home, his wife is condemned to see the necessity every moment encrease; his house has suffered a distress, their next migration must be into the street; the plain reason is this, the wife was virtuous, the husband unfortunate, while the oppressor revels in his plenitude, though his fortunes were obtained by fraud, and are dissipated in every kind of debauchery. Behold, madam, the wife is herself entering the cell, she has brought the poor creature a share of that refreshment your ladyship's bounty has enabled her to procure.

Heavens,

Heavens, what a shout is there ! See, they are bringing in a fresh prisoner. How the old inhabitants cluster round the new comer, as they would say, Welcome to Newgate, brother ! Pray, Mr. Jaylor, what is his crime ? *murder !* A man was executed yesterday se'nnight under a public gallows, upon strong suspicion of committing that very murder, which the prisoner has confessed. There is a confusion in the innocence of some people, and a cross concurrence of ill-looking circumstances, very like the blushing evidences of guilt. Such was the present case ; appearances were strong against him, human sagacity was baffled, and the victim was given up to the laws ; he had a large family, his wife is in a fever,

his

his son is burying reflection in the dreadful opiates of the bottle, and his connexions are in deep and disgraceful mourning.

Yonder, madam, lies a miserable object; unnatural parents have driven her from home, she is too honest to steal, she is ashamed to beg, and being, from the peculiarity of her fate, under a necessity to borrow, she is at last provided for by the bounty of government, that humanely allows the wretched just food enough to perpetuate the sense, and lengthen out the period of calamity. But now, we will leave the sufferings of our own species, and in our way home, cast an eye upon the sufferings of

S E C T. XIV.

THE ANIMAL WORLD.

Take notice how yon team groan under the burthen. They are labouring in this severe weather for the service of man. But observe their driver! hark how the knotted whipounds on their sides; the blood gushes at every stroke, the poor things labour in the extremity, and when they have surmounted the difficulty, the sanguinary master pats them on the neck, not a little pleased with the triumphant vigour of his arm. If it could possibly be supposed that brutes deserved a state of perpetual punishment, a large city were surely
their

their hell. A few lap-dogs, spaniels, and other favourites excepted; the general treatment of animals is savage beyond all comparison of barbarity. *There* stands a cruel wretch who hath beaten out the eye of the fore-horse for presuming to stir, while the car is unloading; he then curses himself for the exploit, and concludes the matter by a second blow, because the creature threw its eye in the way of the first; and see, madam, yon fellow, in passing, carelessly drives his carriage against another that is going a different road; and in order to extricate the intertangled harnesses both divers apply to the old remedy, and instead of calmly setting things right, put the animals on their spirit, and every thing is at length torn in pieces:

a fresh

a fresh beating now ensues, and the poor devils are to suffer again for what, at first, could not, on their part, be avoided. Such are the general lives of horses, and such the discipline practised upon them almost every hour.

It is an happiness peculiar to the softness of your sex, and consistent with the delicate prosperity of the female nature and situation, madam, that their pursuits and pleasures entirely lay in such parts of the town, as make shocking spectacles not very frequent, if we compare them with the more busy parts of the city. There is, I cannot but perceive, a civilization of address, an urbanity of demeanour amongst the very chairmen of St. James's which we shall in vain look
for

for in the messengers of Whitechapel, and the porters of Thames-street. The politesse of the court ever influences in some degree the places that surround it: but in the city, the spirit of humanity is too often trod under feet by the spirit of trade: and the laws of trade have, indeed, so very little in general to do with the laws of benevolence, that in the full, and I might say the overflowing tide of commercial success, a man of business seldom regardeth any life, but such as is necessary to push the point of gain to the extremity.

I must once more draw your ladyship out of the way, to take a view of Smithfield. There, madam, it is high market, and the distemper which some time since raged amongst the
horned

horned cattle, even to the alarm of the nation, was mercy and providence to the usage which the poor creatures sustain in this place. All that sticks, stones, and iron goads can effect, is here effected against those inoffensive animals, by which plenty is procured, riches circulated, and even life supported.

S E C T. XV.

Here, madam, we have selected a few of those innumerable instances which rise up to alarm us. That such have often happened cannot be denied ; and if we were to take a closer survey of the world, with a view to collect a more accurate journal of calamity ; if we were to bring into

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the

the black account, the miseries, both of the rich and poor, the thousand dreadful casualties, which no innocence can help, with the tens of thousands of fatal operations of passion, which deform existence, and agonize our hearts; if we were to consider, likewise, the plagues, the disgusts, the cares, the contests, the depredations of war, and the voluptuousness of peace; if we were to look into the prodigious mass of miscellaneous mischiefs, branching out from avarice, prodigality, gaming, swearing, lawsuits, robberies, chagrines, murders, and every other prophanation; or if we were to dive still further, and mention the distressful situations occasioned by fire, famine, pestilence, earthquakes, inundations, public tumults, and

and domestic inquietude, observing, at the same time, that thousands of every race of beings are frequently pining away life, inch by inch, and are whole years in dying ; adding to this eventful catalogue, the pangs of sickness, the loss of limbs, the deprivation of intellect, the undeserved loss of character, the disobedience of children, and the cruelty of parents, with the horrid havock of those detestable appetites of the heart, revenge and inordinate desire—what, madam, but for the chearful promises of *an hereafter* ; what should we think ? what should we say ?

That there is much happiness, many blessings, and many people who deserve them, cannot be disputed ; the world is in *itself* a paradise ; but pas-

sions perverted, accidents permitted, mischiefs perpetrated, and money turned into the wrong channel, have so destroyed its serenity, that the soul distressed in the world, is obliged to seek frequently for a retired corner, and argue with itself. These reflections naturally lead us to the

S E C T. XVI.

CONCLUSION OF OUR LIBERAL
OPINIONS.

It has been the constant design of the author of this letter, to examine several facts relating to men, animals, and things, in a new manner, with this ultimate view, to vindicate the ways of God not only to *man*, but to
every

every other living creature! The limits I proposed to allow myself are more than exceeded, and the length of my letter (swelled into volumes) seems to demand an apology. The utmost that I can venture more, is to present your ladyship with a few inferences drawn from the whole of our ramble amongst the fields of unusual speculation.

As the innocent man, madam, has often lost his life, and disgraced his relations on suspicion of guilt; as the hardness of the creditor frequently tightens the cord of the law, till it pinches the bowels of a numerous family; as there are actually parents in the world, which not only desert their offspring, but fear up that strong attachment which is generally the

vital principle of nature ; as modesty, ingenuity, and honesty, are often harraffed by innumerable cares and perplexities, to soothe which, even the compliments of the conscience are not always adequate ; and as, on the other hand, those to whom fortune hath been fuller-handed, frequently disturb the good order of society, and use their adventitious acquisitions to promote oppression and to extend luxury. As those who address the Deity in fervor of heart, are often destitute of a comfortable proportion of food, wander naked and forlorn through life ; and others, that have food, want appetite to eat it, while those who never mention the Deity, but to enforce an oath, and give poignancy to blasphemy, enjoy every temporal good,

good, as even the unblemished state of childhood, when power is wanting to perpetrate intentional guilt, as the new-born babe frequently struggles with various distress, at a time when its weakness calls for peculiar supports, wanting which, its future existence is sometimes wasted under the languors of an unsound constitution; as these, with every other calamity I have recapitulated or advanced, thro' this letter, and as many more that can be possibly suggested at a single view, have and do, actually light upon the human race, notwithstanding all the comforts and all the blessings in the world, some astonishing source of consolation is absolutely necessary to reconcile these facts to the mind. To decide upon the matter

(as was hinted before) agreeable to our ideas of rectitude, we should pronounce it, without hesitation, a monstrous system, which confounds right and wrong, innocence and error. Natural reason would condemn it as inconsistent, Pagan philosophy would reject it as barbarous, pedantry would call it unfit, poetry would declare it unjust, common sense would pronounce it absurd.

Here then, madam, the two comfortable reasons I have promised to give, as the only reconciling ones that can possibly make life supportable, or the strange intricacies of it consistent, deserve to be mentioned. They come to us under the cherubic forms of FAITH and RELIGION; just as we are sinking under our doubts, they come forward

forward to dispel them; they give strength to reason, force to philosophy, and illumination to conscience; the wretched insulted heart listens to their arguments, and finds them decisive; revelation herself steps in to our relief, she confesses, with the poet, there is apparent confusion in the regularity of Providence, that the cloudy mirror, through which the human eye is directed in purblind speculation represents the path of virtue as thorny and crooked, and the road to vice flowery and delightful, but that, were it possible for men to wind with their Creator, through all the infinitude of mazes that lead from first causes to ultimate effects, to view all the labyrinths which are absolutely necessary to connect, continue, and
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complete the system, the whole matter would be inverted, and the regularity appear without confusion. Thus, therefore, madam, all comes right at last.

“ To be good is to be happy,”

“ The confusion is regular,” and

“ Whatever is, is right.”

A future life only (in every instance I have mentioned, and in many that I have omitted to mention) can make the present life supportable, or the present system equitable. And upon these rational principles I would argue the essentiality of that futurity; but not so much from the power and wisdom, as from the benevolence of the hand that hath prepared us for it; nor is the attribute of justice less
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concerned in this provision, for, were the death of the body, the death also of the soul; the devil himself, as the system now stands, might yet want a malignity in his nature to continue it; and, in that case, the wisest way to put an end to a man's torments would be the shortest, and suicide would obtain a sanction from common sense. The very equity and tenderness of the supreme power is concerned in a distribution of future punishments and rewards; to those attributes, therefore, should every unhappy creature look up, from them should expect the hour, in which, that which is "now crooked shall be made strait," and every unevenness be smoothed, when the balances shall
be

be poised by an omnipotent arm, and
and justice at last prevail.

Having thus vindicated the ways of
God to man, I will now put an end
to my letter, and beg you will accept
it at the hand of

Your ladyship's

most humble and

obedient servant,

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SECT.

S E C T. XVII.

P O S T S C R I P T.

As these sketches are designed for publication, and are to stand at the tribunal of a society of literati, who review and take cognizance of every thing that ventures into this world of composition, I shall lay myself too *negligently* open to their censure, if I leave, ultimately, the animal creation, in the lurch, after having all along declared so much in its favour. And this renders a *postscript* essentially necessary. Nor should I, indeed, stand excuseable to your ladyship, if I omitted so material a part of the conclusions

clusions to be drawn from our survey of the subject. Having vindicated (notwithstanding all the miseries of good men, and the successes of bad men) the dispensations of God towards our own species, let us now then, madam, in the same transient, unsystematic manner, vindicate the ways of God to a numerous race of beings, no otherwise connected with our species, than by the ties either of attachment or necessity.

S E C T. XVIII.

GOD VINDICATED TO BRUTE.

'Methinks, madam, the haughty-hearted man takes fire at this; what! would the wicked wretch put the reptile

reptile and the rational upon an equality? would he give to the almost undistinguishable atom, to the dog that lacqueys may heel, and to various monsters of the forest and the ocean, the same prospects with man? with the erect, the comprehensive, the superior? God vindicated to *brute*! oh, infamous! blasphemous! inconsistent! Shall the ox that I kill for the ordinary supply of my appetite, and the mule, that I drive for my diversion, be upon a level with their master? are they not all born to accommodate our convenience? are they not all put in subjection to our controul? and do we not treat them accordingly? I have no time to answer the cavils of self-sufficiency; we will proceed coolly, madam.

Let

Let us argue this point from the impulses of common sense: in our survey of the sufferings of brutes, it appeared, that with a great deal less cause, they underwent, at any rate, as much hardship as men: our inspection, indeed, into this matter, like our inspection into the calamities of our own species, was slight and cursory; but were we to set apart a serious opportunity to examine the subject to the bottom, we should find animal misery equally extended and exquisite with human. They are destitute of reason, true; and it must be owned, that a *moral* sense of the injuries men suffer, frequently give poignancy to the anguish; the mind takes, as it were, an interest in the sufferings of the body; thus a blow on
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the face is redented, not because of the pain wholly, but partly because of the idea annexed and associated to such an act ; and with respect to other miseries and accidents, the mind by sympathizing often doubles them. This may be brought against me as an argument. It is none, madam. Even if the sensations of animal pain were merely corporeal, they must be sufficiently terrible, when we consider that they are molested by every innovation of torture ; but I do not apprehend their sensations of anguish only *bodily* ; they have not reason, but they have *something* that does the business of reason so well, that man is very often put to the blush, and is almost ashamed of the privilege that sets him at the top of the scale. The fact

is, brutes are as sensible of insults done to each other as men; these they resent indifferently. If they do not often resent the barbarities of men, it is not I should conceive, madam, because they do not feel the indignity, but because the benevolent Creator has implanted in their natures a strong principle, either of terror or obedience, an unlimited idea of human *superiority*, or an unlimited idea of his *tyranny*. Be this as it may; certain it is, that the situation of animals in this life, particularly such as are subdued to the domestic dominion of man, (and such commonly display the most amiable qualities) is not such as can possibly make that life upon the whole desirable. In a state of nature, where they took peaceful possession of
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the woods, it might be different. In their present state of subordination to the imperious law of man, nothing can exceed their miseries, nor can any miseries be more diversified. Will it be urged, that a great many of them are savage in their natures, and cruel to each other, that they are at continual war, invade the repose, property, and pleasures, of one another; that they actually subsist by murder and rapine, and that man is justified in his usage to them, nor can they upon *this* account fairly claim protection or redress from Providence. This would prove a sorry argument. Do not *men* live upon each other, are not they at perpetual war, are not many of them savage in their natures, do not they disturb

the peace, and invade the property of their fellow-creatures? Is not every paltry trick tried, and every dirty passion put in motion, to perplex, over reach, and fret one another? Is not this so general a fact, that the eye sees, the ears hear, and the heart feels it *every hour*? Is it not the tale of tradition, the burthen of composition; the history of the day, and the evidence of every newspaper; spreads it not over the most distant climates, from the polished European, who seizes his prey under a mask, to the honest Hotentot, who casts it upon the ground, and sits openly down to his banquet? and yet where, madam, is the man, who would from hence argue, that for these reasons they must never look up
for

for mercy, but die without hope, without expectation, without prospect? Rather let them mend the imperfections, they have been so sharp-sighted to detect. If the cruel inclination subsisting in the bosoms of particular brutes, strikes them with horror; let it operate properly upon the *human* heart; but let them reflect, that the *animal* never kills, but to gratify the calls of famine, or in its own defence; but that the *rational* frequently murders for sport, and inflicts pain from a principle of malignity.

The state of animals, after they leave the present world, has been the subject of very distinguished talents; and some have very warmly contended for their immortality.

Amongst sacred writers, Moses and Solomon, have leaned much in their favour : amongst moderns, Mr. Locke, Dr. Hildrop, Soame Jennings, and many others have taken up the cause: neither have French, Spanish, or Roman authors been without conjectures on the subject. So that I have a sufficient sanction to enter the list, as the champion of so many *millions* of useful, beautiful, and innocent beings.

Look upon your favourite, how harmless ! how affectionate ! Would it not hurt you to consider, that in a very few years, the poor creature must putrify in the dust, and, mixing with it, soon become common earth, without hope of resurrection ? for my part nothing could give
a keener

a keener shock to my sensibility than the horrid idea of universal annihilation prevailing over the animal world; I protest, madam, I am almost ready to shed a tear to the very sentiment: must my dear Tabythetta, my demure Grimalcena, my merry Scugypugiffa (you will pardon me, madam, for *Italianizing* their names, there is something so dreadfully dull and mechanic in the sound of an English appellation) must all these, with that great traveller Tripsea, sink into nothingness! into oblivion! into dirt!

“ Oh horrible, horrible, most horrible”!

But I see, madam, I am likely to swell my postscript to the unreasonable
size

fize of my letter, and yet if you knew how extremely painful it is for a man, warmed by his subject, and entertained by his ideas, just as that subject begins to take possession of him, while a swarm of benevolent arguments are pouring their honey in upon him, and charm him with the prospect of carrying his point; if you knew the pangs, that laying aside the pen, in so delicate a moment, costs a writer, you would certainly pity me; however, I have said enough of this matter, and every other, just to shew my *intentions*; and I beg your ladyship, and I beg also my critics may consider the whole as a mere collection of etchings, the pencil roughly run over them, the outlines just marked, but that, the boldness, the
graces,

graces, the proportions, the re-touchings, and the finishings, must be the business of several cautious, and future opportunities.

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END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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